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ANTIQUE GEMS AND RINGS.



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# ANTIQUE GEMS AND RINGS.

BY

C. W. KING, M.A.,

FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.



"Those also that cut and grave seals, and are diligent to make great variety, and give themselves to counterfeit imagery, and watch to finish a work."—*Eccles.* xxxviii. 27.

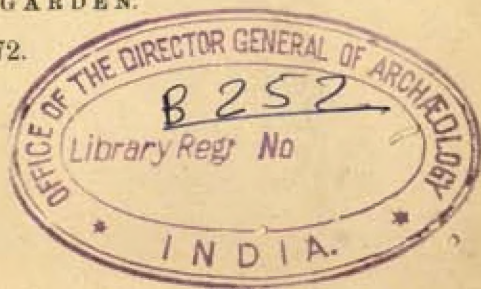
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## PREFACE.

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MY 'ANTIQUE GEMS,' though complimented by too flattering reviewers as an "exhaustive book," was in truth little more than an attempt at giving a general view of the numerous and widely differing branches of an enormously extensive subject. The very favourable reception, however, granted by the literary world to this first attempt, encouraged me, during the following decade, to carry out three of its sections to something more like the fulness that their nature and interest demanded. Thus the section of "Materials" grew, after some years of further research and elaboration, into a fresh volume, equalling its parent in size, and which in a second edition again nearly doubled its contents, under the title of 'The Natural History, Ancient and Modern, of Precious Stones,' &c. The chapters treating of the *supernatural* properties attached by antiquity to the subjects of the glyptic art had previously furnished a field for long and continuous labour in drawing up what, after all, was a very incomplete account of matters requiring so much research; but which, nevertheless, filled a large volume, as 'The Gnostics and their





Remains.' The same subject, of all others the most deeply interesting to myself (but, unluckily, not so to the public), has since that publication occupied much of my time, and its continued pursuit has resulted in an accumulation of matter that would, if ever called for, treble the bulk of its predecessor in the same walk. All who have seriously entered into such studies, are well aware that to treat of Gnostic monuments with the completeness that their abundance, variety, and bearing upon the history of religion demand, would require an extension of limits compared with which those of the volume just mentioned would appear no more than of a hasty sketch. And, lastly, whatever the original text contained upon the rise and progress of glyptics in connection with the history of creative art in general, being brought together into a continuous form, and supplemented with an account of public collections of gems, and the more important pieces they possess, constituted by themselves a treatise of considerable extent, under the name of 'The Handbook of Engraved Gems.'

Nevertheless, after all this cutting and carving from the parent stock, there was still left intact what the actual amateur and collector of the productions of the art would regard with good reason as the most essential portion of the whole. This was all that relates to gems viewed as objects for the cabinet, and valuable in exact proportion to their authenticity and fulfilment of the promise they bear upon their face; for which end information upon *dimensions, forms, mechanical execution, subjects, and styles*, was particularly demanded from a book professing to offer guidance to the dactyliologist in every walk of his pursuit. Equally desiderated by the same class of readers was the knowledge of the *uses* which the objects of their pursuit had originally subserved, and of the various *fashions* devised by ancient taste and ingenuity to enable them best to perform those purposes. With a view to the accomplishment of this remaining portion of my self-imposed duty, I have taken every opportunity, during the interval since my first essay in this department, of collecting information upon the last-mentioned points, partly practical,

from the examination of numerous cabinets, opened to me by the kindness of their possessors, to whom my first book had served for a letter of recommendation; from the perpetual communication of fresh types on the part of all sorts of collectors seeking information from one whom they seemed to take for granted had set up for an oracle, "in re gemmaria," by the committing of himself to print; from the unremitting collection and study of a large series of casts of all important gems; and, lastly, from never losing a chance of forming an opinion upon every work that came within my reach, belonging to the immense literature of the subject, a department in which the two last centuries have been so wonderfully prolific. All the large stock of notes and extracts thus brought together, after religiously obeying Horace's precept—

"Nonum prematur in annum"—

I have incorporated with the chapters of cognate nature, and thus have gradually remodelled and rewritten the whole, often finding the means for expanding mere passing allusions into entire pages, so that the present work might have the better claim to the title of a complete account of *antique* gems and rings. The epithet, indeed, is somewhat too restrictive; for our cabinets being fully as much indebted to the artists of the Revival as to those of antiquity, considerable space has been, in justice, allotted to those once famous Italians who took up the smouldering torch from the dead hand of *Dea Roma*, and speedily fanned its flame to its pristine (but a more fantastic) lustre. The chapter "On the Portraiture of the Ancients" was written for the 'Archæological Journal,' but being intimately connected in nature with the section it now follows, and the interval since its publication having furnished me with much new and curious matter, I have judged its introduction absolutely indispensable to the completeness of the present treatise.

The correspondence with distant amateurs, above alluded to, has enabled me to enrich these pages with some important new discoveries of gem-stars, hitherto unpublished. Most remarkable amongst these for novelty and interest of subject are the *Telephus* consulting the



*Oracle*, of the Hon. A. S. Johnson; the *Family of Ptolemy I.*, of Mr. Muirhead; and the so-called *Demosthenes*, by Dexamenos, belonging to Admiral Soteriades; the last being, in all likelihood, that most precious of monuments, the portrait of the old Chian engraver himself, and from his own hand. The larger portion of the illustrations in the *text* have been engraved for the present work, and are taken from gems of the greatest celebrity. Some have been often published, in every variety of manner, but are now reproduced by Mr. Utting with an accuracy and an intelligence of their true spirit, which every one who understands drawing will appreciate, and would seek for in vain in their representations in previous publications.

The series of plates consists of all the illustrations from my preceding, and other works of similar nature, carefully arranged according to their subjects, so as to form a general atlas of the glyptic art. They compose the largest and most comprehensive series ever presented at one view, nearly equalling in numbers that of Gori's '*Museum Florentinum*' (by far the most extensive hitherto published), and far surpassing that work in completeness, for it is entirely deficient in all that relates to Oriental art of any period. For the benefit of those requiring more minute information in the different branches of the subject, I have appended a list of "books upon the glyptic art and cabinets of gems," with brief notices of the character of each. Those only are put down which have been actually examined by myself with sufficient accuracy to enable me to form a correct judgment on their merits. Merely to have transcribed from library catalogues (as Millin has done) the *titles* of such books, without any knowledge of their real value, would have served no other end than by a false parade of one's own reading to bewilder and mislead the inquirer; and, besides, to have unprofitably occupied a large portion of my space, so incredibly productive was the dactyliology of preceding times.

C. W. KING.

Trinity College, 1871.



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## DESCRIPTION OF THE WOODCUTS IN THE TEXT.

Title-page.—Telephus, King of Mysia, consulting his national god, the Indian Bacchus, how he may obtain a cure for the festering wound in his leg, received from the spear of Achilles. The story is very graphically told by the writhing anguish manifested in the attitude of the despairing hero, and by his bandaged limb, whilst the *spear* placed so conspicuously against the altar, at once indicates the cause of the mischief, and prevents our mistaking the sufferer for the equally lamed Philoctetes, of whom the distinctive attribute is the bow. A bust of a deity placed upon an altar is the regular conventional method for expressing the presence of an Oracular shrine. This very interesting type, no other example of which can I find published, has been lately communicated to me by its possessor, the Hon. A. S. Johnson, Utica, U.S. Golden sard, drawn to twice the actual size.

Page, v.—Bust of Pallas, covered with an almost transparent robe, represented with wonderful delicacy by the engraver. Her head is covered with a helmet, made to imitate locks of hair, although its rigidity has been carefully expressed, so as to leave no doubt as to its composition: it is surmounted by a lofty crest. This curious as well as beautiful design must have been a copy from some statue of great celebrity at the time, for the Bueas Cabinet possesses a replica of this on a smaller (though still unusually large) scale, which has every appearance of being antique. It has been supposed by some to be taken from the Minerva of Phidias in marble, the principal figure in the western pediment of the Acropolis Sardoine, slightly enlarged in the drawing. (*Florence.*)

Page ix.—Ptolemy Soter, Berenice, and their son, Philadelphus. The head of the



father is *laureated*, to mark his deification; that of his son is *diademed*, to show that he was then the reigning prince after his father's decease. These striking peculiarities of costume render it almost certain that this very remarkable gem was engraved for the actual signet of Ptolemy II. (*Vide* p. 187.) The gem is a sard, one-third of the dimensions of the drawing, and was brought from Egypt many years ago, and long in the possession of a noble lady. (*Muirhead*.)

Page x.—Nushirwan the Just. The same portrait that is seen on his medals. Calcedony. (*King*.)

Page xi.—Jupiter Axur, or "the Beardless." Now explained as Augustus under that form; an attribution, however, controverted by the *diadem*, which can only belong to a Greek king. There is consequently much better reason for discovering in this fine gem a copy from the celebrated painting by Apelles of Alexander, in the same character, which decorated the temple of Ephesus. (*Orleans*.)

Page xix.—Bacchanalian concert. A Bacchante and young Faun, reclining on a lion's skin spread in the shade of a tree, are singing to the accompaniment of Pan's syrinx. Cameo of the best Roman period. (*Beverley*.)

Page l.—Cupid guiding a lion by the sound of his lyre: emblematic of brute force subdued by Culture. The signature is one of the very few whose authenticity is beyond suspicion. The artist's name is commonly read "Protarchos;" but closer examination proves it to be "Plotarchos," the Boeotian form of Platarchos. Cameo. (*Florence*.)

Page 17.—Augustus, in advanced life. The inscription shows it to have served for the seal of the municipality of Valeria in Latium. A valuable example of a *public* seal thus authenticated: first made known by Visconti in his 'Esposizione di Gemme Antiche.' (*From a Cast*.)

Page 18.—Antinous, with spear on shoulder, in the character of Achilles: a portrait in the so-called "Heroic" style. Sard. (*Marlborough, formerly in the Zanetti Cabinet*.)

Page 35.—Persian noble on horseback: an engraving of uncommon excellence in the Sassanian style, from the correctness of the drawing and the delicate execution of all the details. The name, in Pehlevi letters of the earliest form, seems to read "Arinani." Amethyst. (*Paris*.)

Page 38.—The Cylinder of King Uruk: the most important relic of Assyrian art. Described at p. 42.

Page 52.—The Cylinder of Sennacherib. Described at p. 44. Amazon-stone. (*British Museum*.)

Page 53.—Ashtaroth and a worshipper. From a cylinder. (*Layard*.)

*Ib.*—Two figures of *Sin*, the moon-god. He appears as an old man, leaning on a staff, and walking over the crescent; thus presenting a singular analogy to the present popular idea of the figure of the "Man in the Moon." Intagli on cones. (*Layard*.)

Page 58.—Sapor, the Fire-priest of the Hyrreans. His lofty tiara is emblazoned with the Tripod, emblem of his office. Described at p. 62. Carnelian, slightly enlarged. (*British Museum*.)

Page 86.—Varabran Kermanshab; as will convincingly appear upon comparison with the portrait taken from the Devonshire amethyst.

*Ib.*—Youthful prince, probably his son and Viceroy of Bactriana—a circumstance accounting for the legend being written in Pali. These seals (carnelian, and rock-crystal), slightly enlarged in the drawing, were found both hidden in the same hole amongst some ruins in the Punjab. (*Col. Pearce.*)

Page 91.—Brahmines Bull. Given here as an example of the coarse style of work characterizing the great majority of the Sassanian hemispherical stamps in calcedony. (*Praun.*)

Page 92.—Head of a "malignant and a turbaned Turk," very cleverly eternized by a Cinque-cento hand in a fine heliotrope, obtained by Col. Leake in the Morea. A memento of Venetian occupation.

Page 97.—Tablet engraved on both sides, and bearing the cartouche of Amenophis II.; but probably of Ptolemaic date. Yellow jasper. (*British Museum.*)

Page 106.—Chimæra and Sphinx fronting each other. Etruscan graffito in gold. (*Vescovali.*)

Page 107.—Ulysses recognised by his old hound, Argus. Archaic Greek scarabæoid of calcedony. (*Leake.*)

*Ib.*—Hercules and the Nemean lion. Etruscan scarabeus, of extraordinary dimensions, in sard. (*Hamilton Gems, British Museum.*)

Page 123.—Hercules beating down Cycnus, son of Mars. Their names are given in the Etruscan-spelling and characters. Sard scarabeus. (*Blacas.*)

*Ib.*—Arimaspean contending with a Gryphon. Calcedony scarabeus. (*Uzielli.*)

*Ib.*—Lady seated, arranging her hair in a mirror, which a young girl holds to her. In the field may be discovered the names "Miees" and "Dexamenos." A specimen of early Greek engraving, to which few rivals can be produced. Calcedony scarabæoid. (*Leake.*)

Page 124.—Lion pulling down a stag. A national Phœnician device, and the intaglio probably of Phœnician workmanship. Sard scarabeus, found at Vulci. (*Demidoff.*)

Page 130.—Massinissa, to keep to the common designation of this head. The *metallic* rigidity of the beard, however, makes it manifest that we have no portrait at all in this curious gem, but a vizor in the form of a face, like the Sassanian helmets described by Ammian. The gem here engraved is the original; in the numerous copies the beard is naturalized and the features softened into the life required for a portrait. Calcedony. (*Barbarini.*)

Page 135.—Persian encountering two gryphons. Inscribed "Seal of Gadshirath, son of Artidati." Cylinder of the Achæmenian period. Described at p. 49. (*British Museum.*)

Page 136.—Icarus falling from the skies, in consequence of the dissolution of his wings. In his hands are seen the *saw* and the *drill*, inventions of his father, Dædalus, whose own name is put below in disjointed Etruscan letters, ΔΑΙΔΛΕ. Calcedony scarabeus. (*Blacas.*)

Page 136. Neptune tearing open the rocks to make a passage for the Peneus



personified under the figure of a *horse*, the forepart of which is visible emerging from the chasm. Inscribed with the Pelasgic name of the god, ΝΕΘΥΝΟΞ. Scarabeus in sard, from Vulci. (*Durand.*)

Page 144.—Hermes Psychopompus, carrying a soul to Hades. Etruscan scarabeus. (*Berlin.*)

*Ib.*—Cadmus at the Fountain, engaging the Dragon which has slain his companions. Etruscan gem. (*Berlin.*)

*Ib.*—Ganymede represented as an emasculated Etruscan *pincerna*, presenting a *diota* to his lord. Scarabeus in sard. (*Beugnot.*)

Page 145. Etruscan Lucumo, or priest-king, habited in a perfectly Assyrian style, holding a caduceus. In the field are the *Raven*, so important in Augury, and the *Fawn* of Bacchus. Graffito in gold. (*Beverley.*)

Page 181.—Chariot drawn by a Sphinx and a Pegasus, met by a Harpy, who presents a lotus-flower to the driver. As the Harpy is the emblem of Death, and Pegasus became afterwards the regular conveyance of glorified spirits to heaven (as in the Apotheosis of Augustus), this most mystical design may be explained as the arrival of the happy soul in Elysium. Gold graffito. (*Fioli.*)

Page 182.—The Claudian Family. Claudius, with his niece, Agrippina, faces his (adoptive) father Tiberius, who is accompanied by Livia. The Roman eagle in the centre turns his head towards the *reigning* emperor—an ingenious method of indicating the date of the work. The arms and cornucopias filling up the composition, elegantly allude to the Rhetian, Germanic, and British conquests of both Cæsars. Cameo, double the size of the drawing. (*Vienna.*)

Page 198.—Gallienus facing his empress, Salonina. Between them is the Roman Eagle, standing upon the nuptial altar entwined with myrtle. The wheat-ears crowning the pair signify the blessings expected from their union. The emperor has here, as may also be remarked upon his coins, almost the profile of the young Nero. Sard. (*Praun.*)

Page 199.—Miltiades, for so Visconti identifies this portrait upon sufficiently valid grounds. Amethyst. (*Blacas.*)

Page 221.—Warrior wearing a helmet shaped into the head of a ram. Pronounced, on the authority of the Roman Institute, a portrait of Hannibal. Sard. (*Dr. Nott.*)

Page 222.—The famous "Drunken Bacchus," of which Winckelmann observes: "This paste represents the intaglio from which it was taken with all the precision of the original, being perfectly well preserved. And I venture to say that this Bacchus equals in beauty of drawing and correctness of workmanship any other figure of antique art. I further remark, that from the large dimensions of the piece, the artist has had room to exhibit with freedom his knowledge and his resources. We behold the expression of all the parts of the body, so as to be actually able to count the muscles which are termed the *extensors*. And yet the minute details into which the engraver has gone, have not seduced him into losing sight of the character of his subject. For having to represent a god at the age of puberty, with that tender softness and luxurious deportment that are his distinctive marks—all this is here visible, but as it were upon the peaceful surface of a tranquil sea, and where nothing is undulatory, except in an

imperceptible manner from the action of a mere breath of air." Antique paste. (*Berlin*.)

Page 237.—Cupid reclining on the ground, with one hand extended as if in the act of playing with *astragali*. Inscribed with the name of Phrygillus, usually supposed to designate the artist, (the same actually is found on a Syracusan medallion,) but much more probably the owner of the gem. Of this pretty intaglio, Winckelmann remarks: "This is one of the most valuable Greek engravings known, not only with respect to its drawing and execution, but also its high antiquity; for besides the *border*, which is like that in the earliest Etruscan engravings, the characters of the artist's name appear more ancient than those upon any other antique in existence. The *Shell* has here doubtless the same signification as the one upon a coin of Syracuse, at the side of the head of a goddess, which, on the strength of this same attribute, I take for a head of Venus. To this shell has been given the name of 'Paphia,' and 'Cytheriaca.'" ('*Pierres Gravées de Stosch*,' pp. 138, 230.)

Page 238.—Magus performing his devotions before a fire-altar. The other group represents a regal personage contending with two lions. Cylinder of Persian date. (*Layard*.)

Page 253.—Leo holding in his mouth a bull's head—a Mithraic emblem of the solar influence over the earth. Below is seen Scorpio, the guardian Sign of Africa. Red jasper. (*Duchess of Grafton*.)

*Ib.*—Saturn riding in his serpent-car: above are shown his planetary *Houses*, the Signs Aquarius and Capricorn. Sard. (*Dr. Nott*.)

*Ib.*—Aquarius pouring forth a stream of water from his urn, typifying the wetness of the season over which he presides. Antique paste. (*Gerhard*.)

Page 254.—Phryxus borne over the waves by Capricornus, instead of his proper conveyance, Aries. Cameo, slightly enlarged in the drawing. (*Beverley*.)

Page 258.—The celebrated Medusa of Solon, which has been more praised by connoisseurs than perhaps any other gem in existence. It was found in a vineyard on the Monte Celio, in the 17th century, mounted in a regular Cinque-cento setting, with a loop behind for the ribbon serving to fasten it on the hat. The engraving may be of the Greek school, although the type differs essentially from all other antique conceptions of the subject, but the inscription is indisputably modern, as the form of the A shows. Calcedony. (*Blacus*.)

Page 283.—Tiger and Eagle about to seize a Rabbit, which turns towards them with clasped forepaws, as though begging for mercy. "Alliance of the strong against the weak," according to Visconti's way of interpreting these fancies. Sard. (*Leake*.)

*Ib.*—Mouse in a car drawn by a pair of Ants. Perhaps allusive to the names of some famous Auriga of the times, and of his horses. Sard. (*Leake*.)

*Ib.*—Dolphin carrying a trident, as the minister of Neptune. Sard. (*Hertz*.)

Page 284.—Ptolemy Philadelphus and Arsinoë. His helmet is adorned with the Agathodæmon serpent, in compliment to his auspicious rule. His consort, for the same reason, wears the wheat-ear wreath of Ceres. Cameo, drawn to half the actual size. (*Vienna*.)



Page 303.—The Laughing Silenus. A mask shown in front face. Cameo. (*Dr. Nott*.)

Page 304.—Augustus; his bust placed upon a winnowing-fan, (*annuus mystica*), piled with various fruits, in the character of Bonus Eventus. Cameo. (*Beverley*.)

Page 310.—Polyhymnia, Muse of History, and Terpsichore, of the Chorus, surrounded with masks of various characters, rehearsing in front of a sepulchral column. This composition expresses the original object of Tragedy—the commemoration of departed heroes. Cameo. (*From a Cast*.)

Page 314.—Indo-Scythic (Tartar) king, seated, to whom a vassal presents a *torques*, in testimony of allegiance. A rare and interesting type, as belonging to the period of the domination of the Sacæ in Bactria. The gem, a greenish calcedony, extremely protuberant and hollowed at the back, has a small perforation at each end, to admit a thread for fastening it to the dress.

*Ib.*—Siva, holding forth in his four hands symbols of his power as god of Death, viz., the mace, the trident, the dagger, and the *reemal*, or noose, used by his devotees, the Thugs, in strangling their victims. He also displays conspicuously (not shown in the cut) his most characteristic symbol, that of the god of Change and Propagation. He is enthroned upon his regular *vehan*, or attribute, the couchant Bull. This type is of the highest value, as being a very early example of a *Puranic* representation of this deity, for the execution of the engraving is that of the best Sassanian epoch, and consequently cannot be placed later than the end of the fourth century. Deeply cut in a beautiful brownish-yellow calcedony of great lustre, slightly opalescent. Both these gems, lately discovered in the Punjab, have been communicated to me while these sheets were in the press. (*Pearse*.)

Page 316.—Persian hunter casting a second javelin at a stag, already wounded by his first. Engraving probably of Achaemenian date, well drawn, and curious for giving the costume, which is that of the Kurds of this day. Calcedony scarabeoid. (*Leake*.)

Page 317.—Hercules Bibax, inscribed "Admon," formerly supposed the name of its engraver. The "gladiatorial corpulence" (to use Cicero's phrase) which distinguishes this figure from the Grecian type of the demi-god, demonstrates it to be the performance of a Roman master, but one of the best of his school. Sard. (Blacas, or Marlborough.)

Page 322.—Youthful Faun and a Bacchante reclining upon a lion's skin, spread in the shade of a tree, under the auspices of Cupid. A subject which the Cinque-cento engravers were extremely fond of reproducing, with slight variations in detail. The present cameo, however, is an admirably finished specimen of early Roman work. (*Beverley*.)

Page 328.—The fatal ring given by Elizabeth to Essex. Now in the possession of Lord John Thynne, to whom it has descended through the female line. Cameo in a fine sardonyx.

Page 329.—Vulcan engaged in making the wedding-ring for Cupid and Psyche, who, standing at each side of him, with uplifted hands, are pronouncing the nuptial vow, beneath the myrtle of Venus. Sard. (*Dr. Nott*.)

Page 350.—Charioteer, *petasus* on head, driving a *biga* of winged horses. Etruscan graffito in gold. (*Soc. Candelari*.)

Page 351.—Prometheus modelling the body of his Man. At each side stand the horse and the ram, indicating the brute creation from which he had extracted the several qualities, "*particularum undique desectam*," necessary for the mental constitution of his handiwork. Sard. (*Beverley*.)

Page 361.—The Etruscan Venus, *Turan*, seated on the nuptial altar, and holding forth a dove by the tips of the wings. On her lap is the distaff. Solid gold ring. (*British Museum*.)

Page 368.—Sphinx seated, taking a necklace out of a casket: at her side stands a vase, to show she is at her toilet. A fitting signet for some Lais or Glycera of old. Drawn and executed in the most exquisite style of Greek art. Sardoine. (*Hertz*.)

Page 369.—Isis, with lotus-flower on her brow, and holding a sceptre, her bust clothed in an almost transparent robe with sleeves. The face having nothing of the Egyptian type, it must be inferred that this very elegant work preserves to us the portrait of some princess of the house of Ptolemy, deified under the form of her patron goddess. Black and white onyx. (*Muirhead*.)

Page 372.—Two Persian, or Parthian, hunters: one letting fly an arrow at a lion, the other spearing a boar. Their costume is that of the horseman already noticed. Large calcedony scarabeoid. (*Leake*.)

Page 376.—Nemesis standing with her hand placed on a wheel, set upon the top of a column, and which Cupid, on the other side, is causing to revolve, by means of a rope passing over its circumference. A curious illustration of the poetic similes drawn from the use of the magic *trochus* (p. 379). Antique paste. (*Praun*.)

Page 385.—The Grecian *Thorax*, or body armour, an engraving of much interest, from its so distinctly exhibiting the defences for the throat and shoulders. The gem was probably the signet of some noted armourer, like that "old Helicon" who made the helmet with neck-piece worn by Alexander at the battle of Issus. (*From a cast*.)

Page 386.—Ring, set with a green jasper Abraxas-gem, found in the coffin of Seffrid, Bishop of Chichester, dec. 1159. A very convincing testimony to the value attached to these talismans in the Middle Ages.

Page 393.—Murex-shell, yielding the famous Tyrian purple: its figure shows the aptness of Pliny's description, "*clavatum aculeis*," "studded all over with spikes." This type exemplifies my remark about *professional* signets, for it could only have been chosen by a dyer of purple for his seal. (*From a cast*.)

Page 394.—Seal of St. Servatius (dec. 389 A.D.), engraved on both sides of a green jasper, of the size of the drawing. From time immemorial it has been preserved in Maastricht Cathedral, attached to a portable altar of porphyry, attributed to the same saint. It is, however, evidently a Byzantine work, (or an imitation of one,) long posterior to the period of the apostle of the Netherlands. The legend round the Gorgon is intended for the charm, *Μοῖρα μελαίνη ὡς ὄφις*, of which other examples are known. That round the portrait may be the continuation of the same spell, but so blundered as to be unintelligible. The letters at the side, however, can only stand for Ο ΑΡΙ (ος).

Page 396.—Rural Sacrifice: a woman holding a dish of fruits, and a *profericulum* for libation, stands before a blazing altar and utters her vows, "*veta nuncupat*." Calcedony. (*Leake*.)



Page 397.—Privy Signet of Charles le Sage of France. Described at p. 398.

Page 399.—Standard of the Sassanian monarchy: a very frequent device. Almandine. (*King.*)

Page 400.—Portrait of a man, with features of a type very far removed from the Greek, but having much analogy to those of the Pontic kings, on their medals. It may possibly be the "likeness by himself" of the very Dexamenos whose signature it exhibits. The very exceptional character of both head and style in this admirable intaglio has caused its antiquity to be doubted; yet it is apparent upon careful comparison that its technical execution is identical with that of the *Stork* by the same artist, which has always been accepted as indisputably genuine. Identical also are its *form*, and, yet more remarkably, its *material*—a scarabeoid of curious agate, having a yellow sard ground clouded with opaque red, a material so unusual in Greek remains, that no forger would have dared to select it for the vehicle of imposture. Discovered a few years ago in some ruins at the foot of Hymettus, and communicated to me by its present possessor, Admiral Soteriades.

Page 406.—Sphinx scratching her ear with her hind-paw: an action chosen by the artist out of the Archaic love for the representation of constrained attitudes, of which the present engraving is a wonderfully successful specimen. The signature "Of Thamyrys" in the field, if not a modern interpolation, can only refer to the owner. Sard scarabeus. (*Vienna, as generally quoted, but there is one, to all appearance antique, in the Blacas Cabinet.*)

Page 407.—The Flying Stork of Dexamenos. Described at p. 408.

Page 411.—Jupiter Olympus. Roman cameo in a Gothic setting. In virtue of the Eagle at his feet, the god continued to be revered through the Middle Ages as St. John the Evangelist, and in that character was, as a most precious relic, *lent* by Charles V. of France to the Sacristy of the Ste. Chapelle, according to the inscription upon the tablet underneath.

Page 412.—Juno. A good example of Johann Pichler's manner. Carnelian. (*Lace.*)

*Id.*—Pallas, copied from the head on the coins of Thurium. The old spirit has been truly caught by Rega, whose signature it so honestly displays. Aquamarine. (*Formerly Lady Grieve's.*)

Page 444.—Dolphin, Trident, and Cornucopia; united emblems of maritime commerce, naval supremacy, and good fortune—the appropriate signet of some Greek trader of old. Should the bright days of Lord Maryborough ever return, and our Master of the Mint be, for a second time, a man of taste, this elegant and expressive device will recommend itself to him, when seen, as above all others fitted for the reverse of some piece in the English coinage. Calcedony. (*Leake.*)

Page 445.—Bellerophon watering Pegasus at the fountain Hippocrene. The inscription is a blundered attempt at a supposed artist's signature, **ΩΥΚΤΡΑΤΟΥ**. This example serves to exhibit the extreme divergence of the modern from the antique taste in the treatment of subjects for gems. It probably is a work of Natter's. Sard. (*Marlborough.*)

Page 452.—Sepulchral Urn, of unusually graceful form, adorned with a funereal fillet, *infula*. (*From a cast.*)

Page 453.—Combat between a Hound and Wild Boar of prodigious size. The inscription commemorates the hero as "Gauranus (dog) of Anicetus." *Gauranus* is a mountain in Campania, and *Anicetus* sounds like the name of one connected with the sports of the amphitheatre. Both names have a close analogy in their derivation to the *Lydia*, hound of *Dexter*, whose death in combat with a similar monster has been elegantly sung by Martial. Bloodstone. (*St. Aignan.*)

Page 455.—Sea-horse careering over the waves. A pretty Greek intaglio. Sard. (*Leake.*)

Page 456.—Greek warrior, busily engaged with hammer and punch (*marculus, calum*) in chasing the *toreutic* decorations of a suit of body armour, set upon the ground before him. The evident firmness of the metal casing well illustrates the name of *θώραξ aradía* applied to this kind of defence. Probably the signet of an armourer, like the one already quoted. Calcedony. (*Leake.*)

Page 461.—Tritoness advancing to the attack, brandishing a trident: a unique design. Calcedony. (*Leake.*)

Page 462.—Maccenas, inscribed in the field with the name of Dioscorides, in very minute lettering (not shown in cut). Amethyst. (*Paris.*)

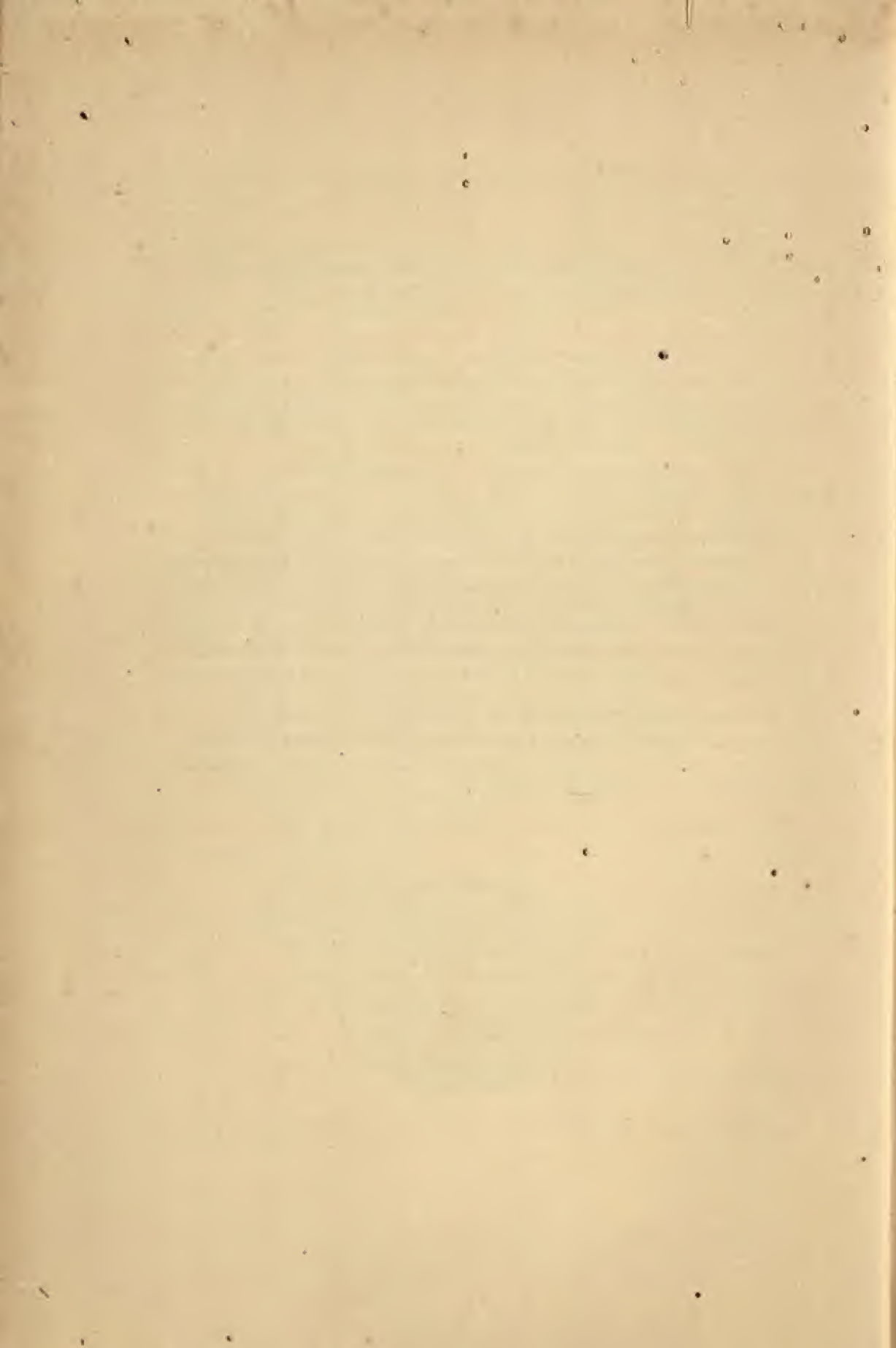
Page 470.—Alexander, a Cinque-cento work, in an unusually large and spirited manner, engraved on the *reverse* of an antique intaglio of Apollo and Venus. Lapis-lazuli. (*Praun.*)

Page 471.—The Pythia seated, immersed in deep thought, in front of the Delphic Tripod. Antique paste, from a lost original, of most delicate Greek workmanship, first published, with due commendation of its merit, by Winckelmann in his 'Monimenti Inediti.' Now at Berlin, but another from the same mould, and equally antique, is in the possession of Mr. Palgrave.

Page 483.—Jupiter descending amidst a shower of thunderbolts upon the dying Semele. An example of all the peculiar features of the Archaic Greek manner. Antique sard. (*Berlin.*)









#### INTRODUCTION.

"In the gems that have been worn by any civilized people, we possess an epitome of that people's arts, their religion, and their civilization, in a form at once the most portable, the most indestructible, and the most genuine." The recommendations of the study, to facilitate which is the object of this treatise, cannot be more correctly, more tersely, nor more forcibly summed up than in these words which I have quoted from a recent and most able writer upon the same subject.\* I shall therefore seek for no better definition. But briefly to pass these several considerations in review, that of *art* is admirably illustrated by the impression which the acutest of German critics has noted as being the foremost to force itself upon his mind when for the first time a cabinet of antique gems was opened to his inspection.† "At the very outset I discovered the most charming subjects in the compositions which sprung to meet the eye from out of these precious miniature representations. What is more, none could deny that copies of great, important,

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\* "Edinburgh Review," October, 1866, p. 528.

† That of Hemsterhuis, then in the possession of the Princess Galitzin, at whose house Goethe was staying at the time.



antique works, for ever lost to us, have here been preserved like so many jewels, within these narrow limits. Hardly any branch of art wanted its representative here, in scarcely any class of subjects was a deficiency to be observed amongst them. Their vigorous, ivy-crowned Hercules could not conceal his colossal origin; the stern Medusa's Head; the Bacchus, formerly preserved in the Medicean cabinet; the graceful Sacrifices; the Bacchic Festivals; and besides all these, the most interesting portraits of known and unknown personages, all commanded our admiration during oft-repeated examination . . . . . I for my part could only appreciate the poetic side of the engravings, the subject itself, the composition, the execution; and pass judgment upon, and admire these points alone: my friends, on the other hand, were accustomed to bring forward totally different considerations upon the same topic. For in fact the amateur, who after procuring treasures of the kind, shall be ambitious to raise his acquisitions to the rank of a respectable cabinet, must, for his own security in the pursuit, not remain satisfied with the mere ability to appreciate the spirit, and the meaning of these precious works of art, and to derive pleasure from them, he must also call *extrinsic* proofs to his assistance—a thing that must be excessively difficult for any one who is not himself a practical artist in that department. . . . . We found ourselves justified on intrinsic grounds of art in pronouncing, if not all, yet by far the largest number of these intagli to be genuine antique monuments of art; and indeed several were noticed amongst them worthy to be reckoned in the list of the most remarkable works of the kind. Some were conspicuous from the circumstance of being absolutely identical with the casts of other celebrated gems. Several more we remarked where the design corresponded with that of other well-known intagli; but which, and for that very reason, too, might still be accounted genuine. In extensive collections, repetitions of the same subject frequently occur; and we should be very much mistaken in pronouncing one of them to be the original, and the rest no better than modern copies. In such a case we ought to keep in mind the noble artistic honesty of the ancients, which thought it could never repeat too often

the treatment of a subject that had once been successfully carried out. The artists of those times considered themselves as original enough when they felt themselves possessed of sufficient power and dexterity to grasp the original thought of another, and to reproduce it again after their own version."

Even a cursory inspection of any large gem cabinet will oblige the man of taste, and learning to acquiesce in the justice of these conclusions of Goethe's. It is evident from the first, and the evidence continually gains new strength from study, that these tiny, yet indestructible, monuments have brought down to us accurate representations of *all* the celebrated masterpieces of ancient art of which descriptions remain; nay more, of innumerable others whose very fame has perished with themselves for want of enduring record. I have, on a previous occasion,\* collected numerous examples which strikingly manifest how that these, the sole unchangeable vehicles of ancient genius, have preserved to us the reflex of much of the departed glory of sculpture, and all of painting, of the times whence they have descended to our own; how the traditional fame of Theodorus, Canachus, Lysippus, Eutychiades, and again of Parrhasius, Athenion, Pamphilus, Apelles, is confirmed by no surviving evidence save what is to be derived from *them*. Again, if we consider the intrinsic merits of antique gems regarded in the view of art, we have in them the emanations ever fresh and unfaded of the feelings and the taste of those ages when the love of the Beautiful was the all-prevailing and almost sole religion, and flourished unfettered by tradition, prejudice, and conventional rules; whilst from the universal demand, during those same ages, for engraved gems, whether for signets or for personal ornaments, artists of the highest ability did not disdain the narrow field of the pretty stone as the arena for the exertion of their powers. The unparalleled vigour and perfection of many of these performances are a sufficient proof that they proceeded directly from the master hand, and were not mere slavish copies by a mechanic, after designs created by the genius of another. Besides this moral proof, we have the express testimony of Pliny (xxxv. 45) that such a distin-

\* 'Handbook,' p. 44.



gnished modeller and statuary as Pasiteles also employed himself in the chasing of plate and engraving upon gems.\* It has been very justly observed by the author of 'Thoughts upon Antique Cameos, and Intaglios,' "that although the work on gems, whether in relief or sunk, be confined to a very narrow space, and though by reason of its necessary minuteness it make not the direct, immediate, and powerful impression upon the imagination and affections which is felt when we behold figures of life, or above life-size in high or low relief, or when given to the eye on pedestals as statues; still it remains an unquestionable fact that in all that relates to anatomical truth, expressiveness of attitude and aspect, gracefulness of drapery, and every other detail and accompaniment of fine workmanship, the Greek, Sicilian, and Roman glyptic artists were eminently distinguished, and especially in that simplicity of contour, and composition, and masterly *ordonnance* that have ever made the study of antique gems so serviceable for the settlement of the principles, and the improvement of the practice, of painting and sculpture. Hence the lovers of the fine arts, and especially artists themselves, may discover the importance of the study of the antique in this particular branch of workmanship. 'For herein,' says Mariette, 'knowledge is brought under the direction of a noble and lovely simplicity, which suffers nothing to be brought before the eye but what is required for the elevation of our ideas.' And to the same effect is the remark of Gori: 'What is there more pleasant than the contemplation of the works of the artists of antiquity, and to behold shut up, as it were, within the narrow compass of a small, it may be a very small gem, all the majesty of a vast design and a most elaborate performance? The art of cutting figures upon these minute stones was as much

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\* Pasiteles, one of the latest lights of Hellenic art, was a native of Magna Græcia, and a contemporary of Varro's, who highly lauds his talents. "Plastice (modelling in clay) matrem celature et statuarie sculpturæque dixit, et cum esset in omnibus his summus, nihil unquam fecit antequam finxit." His best work was an ivory Jupiter, standing in the temple of Metellus. His zeal for studying from nature once nearly cost him his life, for while making a chasing at the docks from a lion in a caravan of wild beasts just arrived from Africa, a panther broke loose from another cage, to the no small peril of this "most painstaking artist." He also composed a catalogue, in five volumes, of all the chief works of art then in existence. (xxxvi. 4. 12.)

admired by the ancients as that other sort of laborious skill which produced full-sized statues out of bronze or marble. It may even be said that gems in their eyes were of greater value by reason of the extreme smallness of the stones, and a hardness that defied the steel tool, and submitted to nothing but the power of the diamond.'

"In short, it may be safely affirmed that the gem engravers of the Alexandrian and Augustan ages were, in all that concerns excellence of design and composition (that is, in all those parts and principles of their art that admit of comparison), rivals of the most famous workers in marble and in bronze, however large the dimensions of their works, or perfect the finish of their workmanship. These wonderful artists contrived to inclose within the narrowness of a little agate-stone all the complicated details of an event in history or of a fable in mythology, and to make them stand forth in beautiful relief as a cameo, or to sink down as beautifully into depths as an intaglio, with all that truth of design and power of expression which characterize the excellence of the largest works of the most consummate masters. Great indeed must have been his taste and talent, his power and patience, who could make a small-sized onyx or cornelian bear on its surface, or within its substance, all those realities of place, person, or thing, which belong to historical events or fabulous traditions. It is Seneca's observation (suggested probably by the sight of some production of the gem engraver's skill), 'that to inclose a whole within a small space is the work of a great artist.' The remark of Sir Joshua Reynolds may also be cited upon this point, as to the importance of making this whole congruous and consistent. 'Excellence,' says he, 'in every part and in every province of our art, from the highest style of history down to the resemblance of still life, will depend upon this power of extending the attention at once to the whole, and to its parts, without which the greatest diligence is in vain.' The gem artists of antiquity, besides their other claims to our admiration, had regard to uniformity of design, to congruity and consistency throughout the entire work; they took care that all its parts were well fitted and compactly distributed and disposed, and that also in all their fulness and effect."



On the revival of learning antique gems were amongst the first relics of better times to claim the attention of men of taste, both from their intrinsic beauty, and the value of the art enshrined within them, as well as by the vast service they lent towards the furtherance of the studies now so zealously pursued. Hence amongst the other measures taken by Lorenzo dei Medici for fostering the infant arts of design, besides accumulating an immense cabinet of the most important gems, gathered from all quarters whither the extensive mercantile relations of his family reached, he drew to Florence, as Vasari informs us, many "masters from foreign countries," to execute new works for him in emulation of the ancient, and at the same time to found a national school of art in his own capital. The large number of magnificent gems, inscribed with *LAVR. MED.*, still remaining in the Galleria of Florence, notwithstanding the dispersion of a far larger portion over every cabinet of Europe, in consequence of the subsequent vicissitudes of his family, attests to our times, the eagerness with which he sought after these mirrors of ancient feeling, and the importance he attached to their possession. They were in truth, at that period, only just emerging out of barbarism, before many statues or bas-reliefs had been brought to light, the sole means of obtaining satisfactory and perfect examples of what Greece and Rome had achieved in the way of creative art. And in no other department was this prince so successful in raising up a school of artists as in this particular one, for the *earliest* Italian camei approach so closely to the Roman, both in spirit and in workmanship, that to distinguish one from the other often baffles the most extended experience, and leaves the real date of the piece a matter of dispute and uncertainty. But, fifteen centuries before the age of the tasteful Florentine, his illustrious prototype, Mæcenas, had regarded this same walk of art with peculiar favour, and has left enduring evidence of his predilection for it, not only in the numerous gem-portraits of himself (a testimony to his wide patronage of their authors), but even in the scanty fragments of his writings that have escaped the universal wreck of the lighter Roman literature. For, to make a general observation, it will be found that

the more extensive the knowledge of the true critic in the other lines of creative art, the more readily will he appreciate this one in particular; a truth which is singularly illustrated by the reflections of Goethe, already quoted, when this, to him entirely new field of thought, first opened upon his view. For none but smatterers in art ever estimate the value of a work by the rule of its dimensions, as did the Gothic architects, who fancied their work reached nearer to perfection the higher it was carried up into the clouds. The man of true taste looks merely to the *mind* displayed in a performance, not at the extent of *matter* which it may have animated. The feeling which induces the pretender to taste to disparage the genius embodied within the narrow circle of the gem, is the same in nature with what has prompted all races, both at the dawn and in the decline of their culture, to erect monuments that aim at producing effect by their *magnitude* alone. Pausanias remarks satirically "that only Romans and Rhodians pride themselves on their Colossi," whilst the masterpieces of the other Greeks rarely exceeded the life size. And thus Cellini, piqued by a remark of Michael Angelo's, made on the sight of a small medallion\* from his hand, "that a man might very well be successful in such trifles, and yet be incompetent to produce anything of merit on a large scale," in order to demonstrate the injustice of this dictum, immediately set to work at marble and bronze, and when the opportunity presented itself achieved his noble Persens, which most judges now agree in pronouncing superior to anything left us by his overweening critic. Yet even Michael Angelo did not refuse to admit excellence in the glyptic art, as appears from his astonishment and admiration at the sight of a head of Minerva in topaz, obtained by Cellini from the diggers in the vineyards about Rome in 1524; from his supplying Gio. del Castel Bolognese with designs for his two chef-d'œuvres, the Tityus† and the Phaethon; and the value he set upon his own signet, the so celebrated work of his friend Pier Maria da Pescia. We may justly apply to gem, what the best art-critic of our day says of the cognate art, wood-engraving:—

\* Hercules strangling the lion, the figures in full relief, done for Giaolemo Marotti of Siena.

† Now in the Blacas Cabinet.



"These (Bewick's cuts) cannot be too carefully studied: they have a directness in reaching their point, a breadth and largeness in style, exactly analogous to the qualities of Velasquez. So little are perfection and greatness in art dependent on size or material." (Palgrave, 'Handbook of the Fine Art Exhibition, &c., 1862.' p. 126.) To sum up this part of the subject, nothing can be more just than the conclusion of Goethe when introducing his notice of Hemsterhuis and his gems he says: "This estimable man had been led indefatigably to pursue both the *moral* as regards the soul, and the *tasteful* as regards the senses; and this, with a sagacious acuteness peculiar to himself. If a person is to be thoroughly imbued with the former, then ought he always to be surrounded by the latter element. Hence for a private individual, who cannot afford the expense of large galleries, but who nevertheless is unable to dispense with his accustomed enjoyment of art, even when on a journey—for such a person a cabinet of engraved gems becomes in the highest degree desirable: he is everywhere accompanied by the most pleasure-giving of all things, one that is precious and instructive without being cumbersome, and at the same time he enjoys without interruption the most noble of all his possessions." The relation borne by the glyptic to the other branches of ancient art has been pointed out by Creuzer with much sagacity: his opinion upon the subject, as that of the acutest as well as the most universally experienced of all recent German archæologists will well repay the trouble of perusal. "A great proficient in the Oriental languages" has lately discovered the etymology of the much disputed word *cameo*, in the Arabic for *flower* or *blossom*. It would perhaps be an admissible view to regard the entire treasure of gems and camei as one vast flower-garden, or as an assemblage of the finest flowers, as varied in form as in colour, which the creative hand of the artist of antiquity has bequeathed to us in precious stone, like a never-fading plantation made for the pleasure and instruction of susceptible minds down to the latest generations. At all events, the comparison of the *Engraved Gems* of antiquity that have come down to our times, is truly applicable to the 'Anthologies' of

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\* Von Hammer.

smaller poems which we possess in both the ancient classical languages, more especially in the Greek. The gems engraved by the Grecian glyptic artists bear the same relation to the great productions of ancient art, to the statues, busts, reliefs, and similar works of conspicuous magnitude, as do the poems of the Greek Anthology to the grand creations of the Hellenic epos lyric and dramatic poetry. But here one important difference enters into the consideration, that whereas the Greek spirit in poetry soon became too much exhausted to be able to continue its workings in the same form with any success, at that very time the same spirit, still surviving in the plastic arts, was strong enough to produce things that from their form and magnitude can fearlessly take their place by the side of those of the greatest masters belonging to the epoch of Grecian independence. To become acquainted, however, with the wonderful fecundity of the infinitely varied Hellenic genius, it comes to the same thing, whether we contemplate this multitude of the smaller productions of its glyptic art, or read the thousands of Greek poems that lie open to us in the Anthology. A well-stocked cabinet of gems will make nearly the same impression upon our minds as does the richness of that collection of poems. The one, equally with the other, surrounds us with a vast panorama painted by the creative fancy of that genial race, as happy in its production of Form as of Poesy; and offers to us in gems and camei, like its idyls and epigrams, a garland of flowers, which in their infinite variety, with respect to choice, taste, and feeling, can leave no educated mind unsatisfied."

The bearing of our subject upon the *art* of antiquity having now been sufficiently discussed, it only remains briefly to illustrate its connexion with the other heads indicated at our starting point—the *civilization* and *religion*. To the archæologist, or inquirer into the public and domestic life of the ancient world, engraved gems are invaluable authorities, supplying, as they do, the most authentic information that could be desired upon the forms and construction of innumerable articles belonging to war, navigation, religious rites, festivals, the games of the circus and arena, or the stage, with its masks, costumes, and other requisites of scenic use. Let any one, though unversed in this special



branch of antique art, only cast his eye over a good collection of casts from gems, and he, if a classical scholar, will immediately be surprised and delighted at the light suddenly thrown upon much of his reading, by the faithful pictures of ancient life that will there burst upon his view. There will be behold the various pieces of the Greek and Etruscan panoply carefully made out in their minutest details; the chief implements of the sailor and of the husbandman perpetually occur; whilst the elegant forms of Corinthian vases, upon which the glyptic artist so often has lavished his deepest skill, are all that remains to tell of the grand chasings of Theseus, Mentor, and Boethus; and again, the various exercises, scenes, and games of the palaestra, the theatre, and the hippodrome, will be found abundantly restored to existence in the most instructive ways. To quote but a couple of instances out of the long list my own experience supplies; that curious invention, the *hydraulis*, and the mode of working it; the *clepsydra*, also, of which no accurate notion can be extracted from the long technical descriptions left by Vitruvius, are both of them clearly exhibited upon a small sard, recently secured at the Hertz sale for the British Museum, and on an agate in my own possession. Again, regarding these gem-pictures as exponents of religious ideas, and of mythology in its widest sense, we shall discover how many obscure notices that ancient writers have left on these heads are eked out and rendered intelligible by these most incontrovertible memorials of the creeds and ideas to which they refer. They are our chief and best authorities upon the nature of the worship that flourished in prehistoric times in Chaldaea and Assyria; or again amongst those interesting and problematical races whose histories have perished, the Phœnicians and their close allies the Etruscans. Of the last-named race, the education in religion is only to be found written in the records of their gems and engravings in metal. In the same way the new creeds that sprung up and flourished so rankly under the Roman Empire, like the Mithraic and the varied forms of Alexandrian Gnosticism, cannot be properly studied unless by the light of gems the genuine fruit of their doctrines; for the only written documents

concerning these same creeds must be received with much distrust as proceeding from ill-informed or hostile composers. As for the mystic worship of Mithras, scarcely any other source exists whence an accurate idea of its nature can be gathered, except from the talismans which it has left to us in such profusion; so carefully have all the larger objects of adoration raised by its votaries been defaced or utterly destroyed by its overthrowers.

With the religion of early antiquity its *history* is closely united, and here too, gems, from their very commencement, present themselves as a substitute for other records. If the reading of their cuneiform legends can be depended upon, the cylinders thereby declared the signets of Kings Uruk and Tiglath-Pileser I. carry up the foundation of the Babylonian and Ninevite empires to twenty and to twelve centuries before the Christian era, an antiquity hitherto supposed fabulous in the traditions of any nation. The much disputed chronology of Egyptian annals has already been to some extent settled by the evidence of the innumerable scarabei and tablets stamped with the names and titles of their kings; and much more may be expected as the system of hieroglyphical interpretation advances, and is applied to their examination. It may be hoped this immense store of materials will then do as much for the dynasties of Egypt as coins have done for the history of the Greek, Roman, and Sassanian empires. As it is more than probable that the scarabei were the earliest representatives of value in the country to which their invention belongs, the same service to history which their intrinsically precious substitutes in other regions have rendered, may reasonably be expected from their instrumentality. A truly endless source of enjoyment is presented to the educated mind by another and a very rich department of this science. When we arrive at the period of the full development of the glyptic art, we find a new world opening itself to us in the way of *portraiture*, which includes not only the most accredited types of gods and heroes, the truest likenesses of philosophers, poets, and warriors, but also a multitude of the brave and beautiful, only nameless now—

“Carent quia vate sacro.”



Such memorials of the illustrious of old, since necessarily they are but rarely preserved by medals, would otherwise have been entirely wanting, or at best, the deficiency were inadequately supplied by the defaced or dubious statue and bust. And what is more, the intaglio possesses an immeasurable advantage over the medal in the indestructibility of its impress, which no time nor wear can affect, and nothing destroy, except the utter communion of the stone itself. Medals, on the contrary, from the high relief of their surface, and the necessary friction to which they are destined by their nature, added to the action of the earth upon the material, frequently disappoint us in the portraits they offer. Besides which, these last were seldom executed with the same degree of care as the costly intaglio, cut on the precious stone, for the signet of the prince himself, or the man of undying fame, whose "counterfeit presentment" it carries down to the remotest ages.

As this treatise is designed for a guide to the actual collector of gems, equally with the theoretical student of dactylography as a branch of archaeology, it is but fair to give the former some warning of the difficulties and disappointments that he is likely to encounter in the pursuit. And here I shall again preface my own observations by quoting the sentiments upon this head of the "many sided" Goethe, so just and pertinent will they approve themselves to every amateur of experience. "The philosophy of Hemsterhuis, together with its basis and ideas, I could only make my own by translating them into my own language. The Beautiful, and the pleasure derived therefrom, consist, as he expresses himself, when we behold, and conceive comfortably, the greatest possible number of images at one and the same moment. I, on the other hand, am bound to assert that the Beautiful consists when we contemplate the Living in its normal state and in its highest activity and perfection; by which act we feel ourselves impelled in a lively manner to the reproduction of the same, and also placed simultaneously in a state of the highest activity ourselves. Accurately considered, all that has been said comes to one and the same thing, only as expressed by different persons; and

I refrain from saying more, for the Beautiful is not so much a *giver* as a *promiser*. On the other hand, Deformity, which has its origin in its stopping short of its true end, by its nature causes us also to stop short, and to hope for, aim at, and expect nothing at all.

"This being so, I fancied I could interpret his '*Letters on Sculpture*' according to the above rule, consistently with my own sentiments. Nay more, his little treatise '*On Desire*' appeared to me, when considered in this way, perfectly intelligible, for when the eagerly longed-for Beautiful comes into our possession, it does not always make good in particulars what it promised in the whole; and thus it is plain that the same thing which excited our desire as a whole will sometimes not satisfy us thoroughly in particulars. Such considerations were of so much the greater weight as the princess had observed her friend to long eagerly after works of art, but to grow cold and weary in their possession—a fact which he has himself expressed so charmingly and clearly in that little treatise. In such cases a person has in reality to consider the difference as to whether the subject is worthy of the enthusiasm felt for it. If it be, then must pleasure and admiration ever grow upon it, and perpetually renew themselves; if it be not completely so, then the thermometer sinks a few degrees, and one gains in knowledge what one loses in prejudice. Hence it certainly is quite true that a person must *buy* works of art in order to *understand* them, in order that the desire may be put out of the case, and the true value of the object established. Meanwhile, desire and its gratification must here also alternate with one another with a thrilling vitality; they must mutually seize upon and release each other, in order that the man, once deceived, may yet not cease to pursue.

"It is highly vexatious to see a thing, although of the most perfect nature, received with doubt, for the doubter sets himself up above the trouble of finding proof, although he demands it from the asserter of the authenticity of the object. But in such cases (speaking of gems), upon what does *proof* rest except upon a certain intuitive feeling supported by a practised eye that may be able to detect certain



indications of origin, as well as resting upon the established probability of particular historical requirements; and, in fact, upon many other circumstances, which we, taking them collectively, do by their means, after all, convince only *ourselves*, without carrying conviction into the minds of others? But as things are, the love of doubting nowhere finds a more ample field to display itself upon than precisely in the case of engraved gems. Now, one is termed an ancient, now, a modern copy, a *replica*, an imitation; sometimes the stone itself excites suspicion, sometimes the inscription, the very thing that *ought* to have been of special value; and hence it is more dangerous to indulge in collecting gems than ancient coins, though even with the latter great circumspection will be requisite, when, for instance, the point is to distinguish certain Paduan counterfeits from the genuine originals. The keepers of the French Cabinet of Medals have long observed that private collections, brought up to Paris from the provinces, contain a large proportion of forgeries; because the owner, in his confined sphere of observation, has not been enabled to practise his eye sufficiently, and has proceeded in his operations chiefly after the light of his inclinations and his prejudices. In fine, on considering the matter with exactness, the same thing holds good for all kinds of collections, and every possessor of one will be ready to confess that he has paid many a heavy apprentice fee for experience before his eyes were opened."

It is indeed true that no other branch of archæology demands the union of so many qualifications in its cultivator to enable him to advance on even tolerably safe ground in making his acquisitions. A sufficient knowledge of mineralogy, not merely as possessed by the moderns, but by the ancients; a practical acquaintance with the mechanical processes of engraving used at different periods; an accurate discrimination of the various styles of art, for example, how the Cinquecento may be recognized from the antique; and above all, the constant examination of large numbers of engraved stones. All these are requisites quite indispensable to him that wishes to form a collection of gems likely to possess any real value, and fit to stand the

scrutiny of the experienced connoisseur. After the enumeration of all these difficulties and drawbacks, the incipient gem collector may well remonstrate in the words of the student of astrology, addressed under similar circumstances to his instructor, Manilius—

“Hard, wilt thou say, and subtle is the task,  
That these thy precepts from the learner ask;  
When late before mine eyes, as clear as day,  
An easy path to heaven’s own science lay.”

To which expostulation, although we cannot reply with that ancient sage—

“’Tis God thou seek’st, thine aim to scale the skies,  
And, born Fate’s slave, above Fate’s laws to rise ”—

yet we certainly are justified to cheer him on, in the language of the succeeding lines, to persevere in the sure hope of a brilliant reward—

“Toil is the price wherewith such things are bought,  
Such mighty blessings are not given for nought;  
Nor stand aghast the tortuous road to view,  
And things to things still linked in sequence new;  
Let it suffice to have gained an entrance there,  
The rest is ours with industry and care.  
Unless by toil thou pierce the mountain rude,  
Its gold shall ’scape thee, and thy grasp elude;  
Thy flattering hopes shall blackest darkness cloud,  
And swelling earth her envied treasures shroud.  
To seek the gem we cross the world so wide,  
To seek the pearl we plunge beneath the tide.”

And surely that study will amply compensate the expenditure of much money, time, and application, which places within the reach of the lover of art, however moderate his pecuniary means, the acquisition of genuine monuments both of the most ancient and the most perfect efforts of human ingenuity. Although precluded by his circumstances from possessing the works of masters of celebrity in the other, as now considered, more important walks of art, he has it in his power to obtain the finest productions of persons equally admired by the ancient world for their excellence in *this*. Nay more, pursued in all its bearings, this study gives the key to the knowledge not



merely of all antique art, but also of all ancient history, in respect to the origin of nations and of religions. Something upon these two points will be found worked out in the chapter upon Etruscan art.

Finally, to consider the matter from the point of view of the mere amateur, a refined taste and a quick eye, although backed by no very extensive experience in the critical minutiae of the science, will afford much security to his judgment concerning the authenticity of glyptic works upon which he may have to decide. The indefinable character that separates the antique from its modern imitation, may by attention be speedily caught and ever afterwards appreciated. In fact, nothing in this pursuit has surprised me more than the beauty combined with the genuineness of the components of certain collections formed by persons whose sole guide was an apparently instinctive taste, or sense of the True, though unsupported by any special knowledge of archæology or art; a testimony this in itself to the intrinsic merit of the actual productions of the ancient gem engraver, and which holds good more particularly for the correct outlines and delicate finish of the early Greek school. Besides, there remains yet one consolation for the beginner—he who judges merely by the eye, and considers only the *artistic* merit of the performance, though a Pichler may occasionally be palmed off upon him for a Pyrgoteles, or a Sirletti for a Dioscorides, yet even after his eyes have been opened to the mistake, he still retains what is “a joy for ever,” if there be any truth in the poet’s dictum, for his purchase still abides “a thing of beauty,” and that too in the same degree as before, whatever the name or date of its author. How different is the case with the pursuits of the numismatist! The bit of metal stamped with the name of some unknown Greek or Asiatic village, or with the ludicrous attempt to delineate the visage of some barbarian chief, obscure usurper, or Saxon savage, upon the discovery that it has emanated from a false die (ever to be suspected in all cases of rarity), is at once reduced to a “thorn in the eye,” to worse than worthlessness, though originally acquired at a price the finest gem would not demand in the present state of the market. And as regards the grand criterion of authenticity

in the highest line of the glyptic art, let the man of taste and incipient gem collector derive courage from the dictum of our great law-giver, Winckelmann, who lays down that "the perception of the Beautiful, which forms the second portion of the knowledge of art (the first being that of the different national styles and their epochs), has principally to do with the Greek engravings. The Egyptians could hardly be expected to succeed in representing the beautiful, for their climate did not produce it. The Etruscans never arrived to the highest point of the Beautiful, in consequence partly of the peculiarity of their style, and partly of the circumstances of their history. But we already discover the Beautiful in the Greek heads upon the early medals, chiefly in those of Syracuse, even previously to the times when the greatest masters of the fine arts flourished, and at a date when their design necessarily resembled that of the Etruscans. The feeling for the Beautiful constitutes therefore the knowledge of the most beautiful style of the Greeks, and this feeling, united with the understanding of design, is sufficient in itself to guide the student to the science of distinguishing the antique from the modern."







THE TESTS OF ANTIQUITY IN ENGRAVED GEMS, AND THE  
INSTRUMENTS USED BY THE ANCIENT ENGRAVERS.

To a treatise devoted to the consideration of Intagli and Camei,\* works of art whose interest and value depend so much upon their being the genuine productions of the far-remote ages to which they profess to belong, some preliminary observations upon the two points (intimately connected with each other) which form the title of this chapter will prove the most serviceable introduction. No definite rules, indeed, can be laid down here, since nothing but long experience, and the careful examination of large numbers of glyptic works in all their various classes, can supply that almost intuitive perception of true character, impossible to be acquired by any other means. The remarks that follow are the result of much reading, of more thought, and above all, of many years' study of antique gems in the minute examination of numerous public and private cabinets.

The first point that naturally strikes the eye, and, therefore, claims to be first considered here, is *magnitude*. If we think of the purpose to which intagli were almost exclusively applied at the time of their

\* "Intaglio," literally an *incision*, very appropriately designates work sunk into the gem. "Cameo," a word of much disputed etymology, but probably a form of the Arabic *comea*, a charm, or *cumant*, the camel's hump, implies work in relief, whether high or flat.

execution—namely, that of signets to be worn set in rings, we shall have good reason, on that very account, to look with suspicion upon all gems engraved in *intaglio*, the dimensions of which exceed those of an ordinary ring stone; and it will be found in practice that this rule has but very few exceptions, and that almost all *intagli* of larger extent belong to times with other requirements, that is, to periods subsequent to the revival of the art in the sixteenth century. Of course we are not to include in this limitation the huge astrological and Gnostic stones (usually of the cheaper class) that were designed to be worn upon the dress or carried about the person as talismans, but not to serve for signets. For purposes of ornament to clothes, plate, and jewellery, the ancients preferred the true precious stones, the beauty and value of which lay in their colour alone, and which consequently were introduced in decoration without engraving; and, more especially, camei, which size and style of work rendered effective when viewed from a distance, whereas *intagli* conceal all their beauties except from the closest inspection. The finest antique cameo ever offered to me for sale at Rome, was a grand head of Jupiter Dodonæus in sardonyx, still inclosed within the iron frame that had first served to fix it upon the cuirass of some Roman general. The small size of truly *antique* *intagli* (a thing every one must notice in looking over any judiciously formed cabinet), the student will at once perceive how strong a distinction it makes between them and the productions of the modern school. Even since the revival of the glyptic art its practitioners have always preferred surfaces of considerable relative extent, and their best works are to be found done upon stones of larger size than those employed for their less important performances; a practice exactly the converse of that of the ancient engravers. And in the same sense, groups of several figures, and representations of well-known *historical* events, as distinguished from *mythological*, are the almost certain marks of modern origin; whilst the drawing of the Cinquecento school betrays all that exaggerated character of which the paintings on the majolica of the same age may be quoted as the most familiar example.



Again, the antique stones are often of a very irregular form at the back, in fact, retaining their native configuration, the margin alone (the "water-edge" as our lapidaries call it) being rounded off for the convenience of setting. This was done to augment the depth of colour in the finished gem, which any diminution of its thickness would have impaired. The back, though highly polished, will often exhibit traces of deep parallel scratches, occasioned by its having been rubbed down into shape upon a slab of emery; a certain indication this of an antique stone, for the modern are cut down and polished at once by the same operation, upon a revolving metal plate coated with emery powder and oil, which gives them a perfectly smooth and even surface. I must here call attention to a peculiarity that appears unaccountable, but may frequently be observed on the backs of sards cut flat by the ancient lapidary. It consists in two roughly-sunk, shallow depressions, a little distance apart, and occupying much of the plane surface. Many sards also retain traces of such indentations, which have been subsequently ground out; and in the cases where they have been left, the stone was evidently too thin to allow this finishing operation. The only conjecture that occurs to me, accounting for their use, is, that they served for the better fixing of the stone upon a handle during the process of engraving. It is evident they were not intended to brighten the tint of the stone by lessening its thickness, as is done with carbuncles, else the concavity would have been single, regular, and highly polished, as it is in the latter. Antique stones are, as a rule, much thicker than modern ones of the same circumference, hence a thin gem will usually be found, if carefully tested, to belong to the latter class, unless, indeed, the original thickness of the antique has been ground away by some ignorant jeweller to adapt it to a modern setting. The ancient rings, hollow and bulky, furnished by their peculiar make a "box setting" capable of containing a gem of any depth desired.

A high degree of polish on the *surface* of a gem pretending to antiquity, although in itself a highly suspicious circumstance, from the very nature of the case, does not, however, infallibly stamp the *intaglio*

for a work of modern times, for it has long been the mischievous practice with jewellers to repolish ancient gems in order to remove the scratches and traces of wear that true antiques generally exhibit, for the sake of restoring its pristine beauty to the material itself. Mariette censures the fastidiousness and bad taste of amateurs who made a point of repolishing every gem with a worn surface that came into their hands; and a glance at the large collections formed in his day, like the Devonshire and the Marlborough, discovers the irreparable mischief this over-niceness has done to art. It is, in truth, a most ruinous procedure, for besides rendering dubious the authenticity of the piece itself, it destroys the perfect outline of the design by lowering the field, obliterating with outline the artist's finishing touches, and thus, for the sake of a little outward improvement, sacrificing the soul to the body of the work.

On the other hand, an abraded and scratched surface must not be received as an unquestionable criterion of antiquity, for Italian ingenuity has long ago discovered that a handful of new-made gems crammed down the throat of a turkey, will, in a few days, from the trituration of the gizzard, assume a roughness of surface apparently due to the action of many centuries.\* Of the deceptive effect of this contrivance many of the Poniatowsky gems, particularly the portraits, furnish the most astonishing evidence. On this account, if a gem present an unusually ancient-looking aspect superficially, it requires to be examined still more distrustfully, as suggesting good grounds for suspicion in this very ostentation of old age. In a word, though *faith* may be a cardinal virtue with the theologian, yet *distrust* should be especially cultivated by the gem collector, beset as he is at every

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\* A more simple and common expedient was to rub the face of the stone with fine emery-paper, or else with a box-wood pencil smeared with diamond powder; but these methods produce scratches, which, being concentric, betray the motion of the *hand* that produced them, and can always be detected upon microscopic examination. To the white stratum in a modern cameo, the requisite deadness (*mat*) is imparted by soaking the stone some hours in aquafortis mixed with iron-filings, and then baking it. This was the method, Pistrucci says, Bonelli employed with the works done to his order by the artist at the outset of his career.



turn by the most ingenious frauds, devised and carried out by the accumulated roguery and practice of now four hundred years.

Lastly, though the actual *stone* may be antique, yet it may have been pressed into the service of the *antiquario* as the vehicle for another species of deception, and that the most difficult of all to guard against. It has ever been a common practice with the Italian engravers to get antique gems of fine material but low art, and to re-touch, or even entirely re-model the design,\* thus producing an intaglio in a good style upon a material whose aspect suffices to lull to sleep all suspicion. This is the commonest fraud of more recent times, and one against which the only safeguard is to examine with a lens the whole interior of the intaglio; when if some portions of the work bear a fresher and higher polish than the rest, and, above all, if they sink deeper into the stone than is required by the exigencies of the design, a shrewd guess may be hazarded that the deception now described has been here brought into play.

For their own purposes dealers continue to promulgate the belief that a high polish of the interior of an engraving is a certain warrant of its antiquity: but this doctrine is of the falsest, for all good modern engravers have known how to impart to their intagli a polish equal to (indeed, sometimes overdoing) that of the antique. This finish merely requires the expenditure of some additional time and labour in working over the intaglio, internally, with a leaden point charged with diamond-powder.† Another popular notion is, that the modelling wax (which amateurs usually carry with them for examining gems) will not adhere so readily to antique as to modern work; but this,

\* Antique camei also on fine and large sardonyx-stones, but rudely finished (as are the majority of the genuine Roman), have been the especial subjects of this *orthopædic* treatment. The most conspicuous *exemplum probans* of this statement is the grand 'Trajan crowned by a Province,' as the *surant* Denon chose to christen it, still one of the chief glories of the cabinet of the Hermitage, but which in truth owes all its actual merit to Pistrucci, who, in the opening of his fame, entirely reworked the clumsy Lower Empire relief "on an onyx as big as a man's head," put under his care by Dom. Desallef, a Roman *antiquario*.

† For which Guay in his *chef-d'œuvre*, the bust of Louis XV., substituted a quill cut to point; this enabling him to reach the finest lines of the work.

though absolutely correct in itself, in reality depends on nothing else than the relative degree of polish of the stones tested. But as to this particular, the much-insisted on test of internal *polish*, the truest criterion of antiquity (omitting for the present the question of art) I have ever found to be that slight degree of dulness, like that produced by breathing upon a lustrous surface (and literally in this case the marks of Old Time's breath), which the lapse of ages has always cast upon the originally high lustre of the interior of the work. This appearance cannot be imitated by any contrivance of the modern forger; and, once remarked, is so peculiar in itself, as easily to be recognised ever afterwards. So constant is this peculiarity in works of genuine antiquity, that its absence is always to be regarded as very unfavorable to the authenticity of the piece. Besides this, the effect of the real wear and tear of time upon the *surface* of a gem is rather an equably diffused roughening, like that upon ground glass, than the deep scratches and pittings produced by the violent *forcing* of the dealers; personages aptly styled by Pliny "*mangones gemmarum*," and whose reputation for honesty stood precisely at the same zero in his times as in our own.

A very satisfying mark of antique origin is obtained where the engraving appears to have been executed chiefly by means of the *diamond point*; that is to say, where all the lines are cut into the stone by a succession of little scratches one after the other, while all the deeper parts of the design have been sunk by the action of the *drill*,\* a tool with a blunt and rounded point, producing a succession of hemispherical hollows of varying diameter. Some *intagli* even occur that have evidently been *scratched* into the gem by means of the diamond point alone, especially the works in shallow relief belonging to the Archaic Greek school; and as a general rule, according to the obser-

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\* Mentioned by Pliny in his provokingly concise notice of the *technique* of engraving (xxxvii. 76). "*Jam tanta differentia est ut alie (gemmae) ferro scalpi non possint, alie non nisi retuso, omnes autem adamante; plurimum vero in his terebrarum proficit fervor.*" And Apuleius couples the same tool under its more proper name, "*tornus*," with the "*lima*," in a very curious passage of his '*Florida*,' describing the sophist Hippias wearing a gem ring, engraved, set, and made with his own hands.



vation of that able engraver Natter, "the extensive use of the diamond-point is the grand distinction between the antique and the modern art." The technical term itself, *γλάφειν*, *scalpere*, used by the ancients to designate the process of gem engraving, signifies *scratching*; and therefore in itself supplies an explanation of the manner in which the art was carried on when first introduced to their notice from its Eastern place of nativity. This instrument is recognised as the regular engraving-tool, and actually designated in a record of the highest antiquity, and by a resident amongst the Chaldeans,\* its first inventors, the prophet Jeremiah (xvii. 1). "*Peccatum Judæ scriptum est stylo ferreo in ungue adamantino:† exaratum super latitudinem cordis eorum, et in cornibus ararum eorum;*" as the Vulgate more correctly than our version renders the passage. The use of the diamond point is particularly observable in the execution of the *hair* in portraits, when carefully finished, belonging to every epoch of antique art. It produces in them a natural and admirable effectiveness that the modern instruments fail to give to this particular portion of their work.

Of these latter implements, this is the place briefly to describe their nature and mode of application. The principal amongst them, and the one by which both the above-named operations, the cutting lines and the sinking hollows in the stone, are at present carried out, is the *wheel*, a minute disk of metal fixed on the end of a spindle, which is set in rapid motion by a kind of lathe. The fine edge of the disk, constantly charged with oil and emery or diamond powder, speedily bites into the hardest gems; and by repeating and prolonging

\* Rawlinson ('Ancient Monarchies,' i. 120) figures amongst the flint and chert celts and hammers which "are common in the more ancient mounds" of Chaldean sites, certain small pointed things he terms "stone nails," a use to which they could not possibly have been applied. I believe, on the contrary, they are the very tools of the earliest cylinder engravers, and explain, by their existence, the Ethiopian arrow-heads mentioned by Herodotus, made out of the stone used for engraving signets with.

† The *adamas* of the Assyrians and early Greeks was our sapphire: its splinters worked almost as effectually as the diamond on the soft quartz gems then only used for engraving upon.

these strokes, the minuter portions of the design are dexterously incised. The larger and deeper hollows continue to be sunk by means of a round-pointed drill substituted for the cutting disk, and acting precisely in the same manner as the drill of the ancients. The latter, however, was probably always worked by the hand by means of a bow, in the same way as the similar tool still used by jewellers for metal. The modern method, though greatly expediting the operation—for Mariette speaks of Smart, an able engraver of his day, finishing several portraits in a single morning—yet renders the result more mechanical and constrained; whereas the ancient *sculptor*, working with his diamond point like the wood engraver with his chisel upon his block, possessed all the freedom and boldness of touch of a Bewick.

These diamond points so often alluded to were obtained by shivering the *adamas* (whether that were the corundum or true diamond) by the blow of a heavy hammer. Pliny retails a jeweller's story, invented probably to keep up the mystery of the trade, that it was necessary first to steep the stone in goat's blood, and even then it too often split both the hammer and the anvil.\* These little splinters were then fixed in the end of an iron handle, and cut with ease into the hardest of the other gems, "*nullam non duritiam ex facili cavantes.*" The Naxian stone, otherwise called *smryis*,† repeatedly alluded to by Pliny and the physician Dioscorides, and long before their date, by Theophrastus, under the generic name of *ἀκόνη*, as the main agent in cutting and polishing gems—was our emery, a combination of corundum with iron, and which is still exported for the same use from the island that gave it the first-cited appellation. To this day the common method of the Hindoos for polishing the coloured stones is to rub them down by hand on an iron slab coated with

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\* The implement was still known to the ingenious Arab seal-cutters of the thirteenth century. Ben Mansur mentions their expedient of enveloping the stone in lead or wax before shivering it, in order, doubtless, to keep the splinters together.

† From Zmiri, a gem-producing region in Ethiopia.—(Pliny, xxxvi. 25.) "*Signis e marmore poliendis, gemmisque etiam scalpendis atque limandis Naxium diu placuit ante alia; ita vocantur cotes in Cypro insula genitæ; vicere postea ex Armenia vectæ*" (xxxvi. 10).



corundum powder and oil, which explains the rudeness of the facetting in Indian cut gems.\* The "tèrebrarum fervor," termed by Pliny the most efficient agent of all in the process, was the rapidly revolving drill, elsewhere called "ferrum retusum," and this observation of our grand and almost sole authority in the matter, is convincingly borne out by the appearance of many intagli (forming the majority of those covering the scarabei of the Etruscans), which must have been executed with the drill and emery powder exclusively. In such works the entire design is carried out by the juxtaposition of a series of hemispherical hollows of varied extent, touching and overlapping each other, by which inartificial method those wonderful caricatures of man and beast were multiplied by the primitive Etruscan artist. And the failure of that early school in respect to intaglio cutting is the more striking, and must with the greater confidence be imputed to the imperfect mechanical means at their command, when we meet with the very rudest intagli, evidently the first essays of the new art, *enriching*, as their authors thought, the field of scarabei, which are themselves perfect masterpieces of work in *relief*, and which frequently have been honoured with the most elaborate and beautiful of gold mountings; circumstances pointing them out as the original ornaments of a class able to command the highest artistic skill of their age.

To wind up this enumeration of the instruments of the ancient engraver, to which any reference can be found in classical writers; the *ostracites*, or *ostracias*, is briefly mentioned by Pliny as a substance *testacea durior*, "of such hardness, as to be capable of engraving gems with its fragments." Millin supposes, but without the slightest grounds in actual practice, that an allusion is here intended to the use of cuttle-fish bone in the polishing of the finished work. But certain points in Pliny's confused notices of the mineral, incline me to suspect he is transcribing some Greek account of the use of iron pyrites for

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\* They also use a kind of rotary grindstone made out of corundum powder and shell-lac, turned by means of a strap. I more than suspect that the "lima Thynica" of Mæcenas' lines was of the same nature. Files of carbonado (black diamond) and shell-lac are a recent Parisian invention, and cut the ruby.

the purpose—a material substituted for emery in Persia, from the earliest times, in the polishing of precious stones, and indispensable, says Ben Mansur, in that of the spinel; unless indeed we take “testacea” in its literal sense, as meaning the pounded slag from the copper furnace, which Heraclius prescribes as the best material for the cutting of rock-crystal.\* The “marculus” and “cælum,” hammer and chisel, have been added to the ancient gem engraver’s equipment by the learned K. O. Müller,† on the strength of a passage of Fronto’s (iv. 3). “Verba prorsus alii vecte et malleo ut silices moliantur, alii autem cælo et marculo ut gemmulas exsculpunt.” But it is apparent from the nature of the simile that the philosopher is alluding to the extraction, by means of these two implements, of gems out of the *matrix* in which they were embedded (as Theophrastus tells us of the sard), and contrasts this delicate process with the rough work of getting building stone out of the quarry by means of the beetle and crowbar.‡ Natter, whose opinion derives the greatest weight from his profession, suspected that the ancient engraving tool, whatever its nature, both excised and polished its work by one and the same operation; drawing this inference from the existence of so many rude and seemingly unfinished intagli, which, nevertheless, are as thoroughly polished inside as others in the highest state of completion.

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\* This seems to me to be the only possible explanation of his “fornacis fragmina.” Pliny’s “Cadmea” is of two kinds, the native, copper pyrites, “ipse lapis ex quo fit as cadmea vocatur,” and the artificial. This was something produced in the smelting of the ore, and was divided into many sorts (all used in medicine as caustics), according to their degrees of levity. The heaviest of all the placitis, that adhered to the sides of the furnace, was again subdivided into the ostracitis, completely black, and the onychitis, “externally almost blue, but internally resembling the spots on the onyx”—(xxxiv. 22). The copper smelters of Swansea still twist into spirals, as toys, the fine black and blue agate-like slag produced in their work, a substance very aptly to be described by “Onychites.” I strongly suspect these artificial minerals crept into Pliny’s list of gems in another book, purely on account of their employment amongst the apparatus of the gem-cutter.

† And upon his authority by the latest writer on our subject (‘Ed. Rev.’ Oct., 1866), who advances a very fanciful theory as to the mode of their application to cameo engraving.

‡ “Silex” is the *Roman* technical term for building and paving-stone, still retained in “Selce,” in the modern tongue.



This argument, however, is not entirely conclusive: it *might* have been that some mechanical process was then known for polishing the intaglio with very little trouble, and which the lowest class of artists, who produced these cheap ring-stones for the plebeians, were equally competent with the most skilful to impart to their performances.\* In Pliny's time the *wheel*, in its present form at least, does not seem to have been known, otherwise he could not have omitted from his list of engraver's appliances so important an innovation, which once introduced drove all the older methods out of the *atelier*, in consequence of the superior rapidity and facility of its operation. Pietramari, an old Roman *antiquario* of great experience in this subject, thought he had observed indications of wheel-cut work for the first time about the period of Domitian: it is certain we find abundant traces of its use in the coarser intagli of the Lower Empire.† Especially is this method observable in the lettering of the legends on the Gnostic class, where we see the *square* form of the characters universally employed, in consequence of the difficulty of cutting curves with an instrument rotating in a vertical plane; and consequently tending to work forwards in a straight line upon the surface presented to its action. Upon the earlier gems, on the contrary, the letters were scratched in by the diamond point, and therefore whatever their shape, curved or angular, were all executed with equal facility. The rude intagli of the Sassanian period (to be particularly considered in

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\* The denarii of the families Papia and Roscia exhibit amongst their exceedingly numerous mint marks a great variety of tools belonging to the various arts. That some of these represent the tools used in die-sinking, may be inferred from the fact of the hammer and the die being plainly recognisable amongst them. There is, therefore, reason to suppose that others of the number, of singular and inexplicable figure, may be the implements of the gem engraver.

† Jannon de Saint-Laurent has discussed, at great length, the subject of ancient engraving tools in his treatise, '*Sopra le pietre preziose degli antichi; e sopra il modo con quale furono lavorate.*' Part II., published in the '*Dissert. Acad. di Costona,*' Vol. VI., 1751. The conclusion he arrives at is that the ancient instruments were identically the same with the modern, and applied in the same way; and that all antique intagli were executed with the wheel (*rotellino*), and finished off with the diamond point; also that diamond powder was the regular agent in the first part of the operation!

their due place) appear to have been universally cut with the wheel, and the artist must have had but a single implement of the kind at his disposal, as may be inferred from the fact that all the lines composing the design are of the same thickness, and that, generally, very coarse. The wheel was probably introduced into the Roman practice from the East, at the time when the trade in gems had attained to the prodigious extent, of which some notion may be gleaned from Pliny's incidental remarks; and the Parthian conquests of Trajan, and of Severus, in the next century, must have largely widened the relations between the two empires which then divided the world between them. Down to the fall of the Western Empire, and far below, as the crystal plaques, executed under the auspices of the Carlovingian patron of the art, Lothaire, in the ninth century, attest, the wheel continued the sole means for producing the pitiable monuments of the expiring profession.

In the East the mechanical processes have always been maintained in full vigour, from the custom with the Mahomedans of wearing signets engraved in stones, the finest, the most beautiful, and the hardest that could be procured. Persian legends often may be seen admirably cut on the spinel and the sapphire, nay, even on the diamond, as in the case of the Russian "Shah;"\* and these long inscriptions, formed into regular, gracefully flowing curves, often combined into the most complicated monograms, interspersed with flowers and stars, required as much taste and skill in their execution as did the groups and figures of the European artist. At the time of the Revival the instrument, together with the art of gem engraving, was again introduced into Italy, and through its agency all the innumerable master-pieces of the Cinquecento sprung into existence.† And so it continued until that able engraver, Flavio Sirletti, at the opening of the last century, followed the suggestions of Baron Stosch, and by reviving the use

\* The large diamond sold to the Czar by Choeroes, youngest son of Abbas Mirza.

† A curious proof of this is Vasari's putting "*ruote*," literally "wheels," for *intagli* as distinguished from *camei*, when speaking of Val. Vicentino's labours.



of the diamond point, was enabled to get his own works pass current for those of the greatest masters of antiquity.\*

But to make a concluding remark upon the antique method, it is my firm conviction, based upon the study of the finest *genuine* intagli, that the old sculptor, having first sunk his work to the depth required with the drill, and then completed all the details with the diamond point, finally removed all traces of the instruments employed by the high polish he imparted to his work, as the concluding operation; thereby giving it the effect, so characteristic of the truly antique intaglio, that almost melting outline which leaves nothing angular or sharply defined, but rather makes the whole figure appear modelled by the most delicate touch in some soft and plastic substance. So true is this, that one is frequently inclined to mistake the best antique gem work for modern paste, until the reality of the *stone* is tested by the file, so exact an appearance does it present of having been produced at once, by casting in some fused material, rather than that of a design, slowly eat by assiduous labour into the hardest and most refractory of created bodies. Intagli are occasionally to be met with which the engraver has for some unknown reason left unfinished; perhaps on account of some accident or blunder during the progress of the work beyond his power to rectify. On such a commenced sketch (which is figured in his plate, No. 35, 36) Raspe makes the following instructive observations: "A sketch of Thalia standing, with the mask and curved pastoral staff, which shows the manner in which the ancient masters executed their works; that is to say, the extremities of the legs are only simple strokes that imitate the bones. On the upper parts of the bosom and the body it is evident that they engraved the *nude* previously to engraving the drapery, which in this instance the artist has begun to put in afterwards. Everything proclaims an artist, who in his desire after correctness, used to

\* Pistrucci has left it written in his delightful autobiography, that all his master, Mango, taught him when first apprenticed, was how to pound the diamond powder, and to what side to turn the wheel; adding, that in truth there was very little else to be taught in the art.

work on the same plan as the celebrated Burch, whose panegyric we have already proclaimed elsewhere" (at No. 5844).

• "All the works of Mr. Burch are of classical elegance, as well with regard to proportion, as in the details and execution; for he does what few engravers have done or can do, he *begins*\* the figures to which he sets his hand, which are academical and anatomical studies and sketches."

The extreme minuteness of detail, conspicuous in many antique works, has induced certain writers on our subject boldly to assert that the engravers must have had some means of assisting their sight, equivalent to our magnifying-glasses. In confirmation of their theory, a story is vaguely told about some engraved gems found in company with a convex glass lens at Pompeii† and they at once jump to the conclusion that the lens had been employed in the engraving of these particular gems, and *therefore* formed a regular part of the artist's stock. But the supposed *lens* was in all probability no more than a paste imitation of peridot (the commonest of all), cast in *cabochon*, and itself prepared to receive an impression; such a shape being the favourite one with the ancients for all the transparent coloured gems, whether intended to be worn engraved or plain. A large pale amethyst of my own, on which the intaglio, a hippocampus, occupies only a small extent of the field, does, when properly applied, act as a magnifying lens of great

\* That is "from the beginning," the skeleton.

† In Stabie Street, in the year 1854, and now in the Museum, Naples. It is of a pale green colour,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in diameter, having the edges ground for setting. The half of a similar, but somewhat larger disk, was found amongst Roman remains in London, and is described in 'Journal of Arch. Association,' XI., p. 453. But I strongly suspect the whole theory is based upon Layard's discovery at Nineveh of a plane convex crystal lens,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch in diameter by 1 deep, found in company with some glass vases. He and Rawlinson both suggest that it was a true magnifier (its focal length being  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches), used either for reading the small cuneiform legends, or in gem engraving. An obvious answer to this hypothesis is that, had the use of crystal lenses for these purposes been known, considering the vast extent to which the glyptic trade then flourished, they would now turn up by hundreds, and not in one solitary example. Orpheus (Onomacritus), that thorough Magian, informs us of the true object of the crystals thus shaped, *viz.*, to kindle the sacred fire, or, as he terms it, the "fire of Vesta."



power, a remarkable property that one cannot help supposing must have attracted the attention of some amongst the ancient possessors of similarly formed gems. Besides, an antique Greek ring has been seen by me, set with a lenticular crystal, unengraved, which if found loose in suitable company might very well have passed for a magnifier. But Pliny, who notices so particularly the various requisites of the glyptic art, and who certainly possessed more than a theoretical knowledge of all its processes, would never have omitted this most important auxiliary, both to the artist and the amateur, especially when he actually mentions "that engravers, whenever their sight is fatigued by the excessive strain required by their work, refresh their eyes by looking upon an emerald." Seneca, indeed states (*Nat. Quæst.* I. 6),\* "that glass globes, filled with water, make small and obscure objects seen through them appear quite legible and distinct;" but he ascribes the effect to the nature of the water, and gives no hint that in his day the discovery had been applied to any useful purpose. It has however been supposed that the ancient engraver directed the light from a small window or a lamp so as to pass through one such globe, and fall in a concentrated focus upon his work, in the same manner as is still done by jewellers working upon small objects by lamp-light; and as the present practice can be traced very far back, there is a possibility of its having been handed down in the traditions of the trade from remote antiquity.

But the truth is, that gem engravers do really execute their work with little assistance from the magnifier, the chief use of which is to ascertain the progress made in the sinking the design into the gem, by repeated examination of the impression taken at short intervals in soft wax. For by the very nature of the operation, in which the gem is held, cemented upon a handle, against the edge

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\* Having previously (xxix, 38) noticed the use of a green beetle for the same purpose in a very curious passage, which, however, has escaped the observation of all previous writers upon ancient glyptics: "*Scarabei viridis natura contuentium visum exacuit, itaque gemmarum scalptores contuitu eorum acquiescunt.*"

of a revolving *button* smeared with oil and diamond-powder, the actual work doing is concealed from the eye of the operator, who regulates the cutting more by the touch, and the instinct derived from long practice, than from ocular observation; whilst he keeps a check upon the excising power of the instrument by the repeated application of the lens, both to the stone and to the impression in wax. Again, the dust and oil combined fill up the lines as the work proceeds, so that the inspection of the cutting itself is rendered practically impossible. Even in *intagli* executed with the diamond point solely, the same inconvenience existed, if we suppose the ancient engravers employed that tool in the same manner as the Italian described by Vettori as fixing the diamond-splinter in the end of an iron pencil a span in length, and rubbing it to and fro over the lines to be traced upon the gem, dropping upon the place occasionally emery-powder and oil. Such being the case, the whole seeming difficulty at once vanishes, for the minutest work, that of the early Greek *intagli*, is distinctly visible to the naked eye when well practised in the examination of such objects; whilst the *intagli* of Roman date, from their bolder and less finished style, offer no difficulty whatever, even to the ordinary observer, who is able to catch every detail of the subject without artificial aid. As for truly antique camei, their style is so vigorous, not to say careless in details, being only intended to produce effect from a distance, that the artist could have experienced no more difficulty, as regards sight, in working them out of the sardonyx with the unassisted eye, than in the carving of small bas-reliefs in any other less resisting material; and with respect to this literal "working in the dark" in the case of *intaglio*-engraving, Vasari has long ago made the same observation: for he calls it "*Una arte tanto difficile perchè intagliando in cavo è proprio un lavorare al buio, dachè non serve ad altro la cera che per occhiali a vedere di mano in mano quel che si fa.*"\* It must also be borne in mind in how much higher a degree of perfection the Greeks

\* "So difficult an art, because engraving in *intaglio* is regularly working in the dark, since the wax serves no farther than to show, through the magnifying glass, from time to time, what is going on."



possessed all their bodily faculties than the moderns, owing to their gymnastic training and simple mode of life; whilst with us all these faculties are dulled by our over-civilization, and, as regards the sight, by the invention of printing, through which, and the early overstraining thereby entailed upon the optic nerve, it is prevented from ever attaining to its full development.\* Nevertheless, some of our best wood-engravers do work without a lens, and there is an almost complete identity between the *technique* of their practice and that of the Etruscan or early Greek λιθογλύφος.† There can be no doubt, however, that the use of a magnifier was known much earlier than is generally supposed, for Ducange communicated to Menage a passage out of an unpublished poem by Protoprodrōmus, who flourished about A.D. 1150, where speaking of the physicians called in to the Emperor Manuel Comnenus, he has,—

“ἔρχονται, βλέπουσιν ἐυθὺς, κρατοῦσιν τὸν σφνυγμὸν τοῦ  
θεωροῦσιν καὶ τὰ σκύβαλα μετὰ τοῦ ἡελίου,”—

which ἡέλιον Lessing (Ant. Briefe. XLV.) explains plausibly enough as a magnifying glass. Ages before, the same word is employed by Aristophanes for a burning-glass, which by its nature is at the same time a magnifier.

\* As examples of extraordinary powers of vision, Pliny (vii. 21) mentions the whole Iliad written out on parchment, of such a size as to be contained within a walnut, which Cicero had seen. This poem now fills 620 pages, 32mo., of small Greek type, Tachnitz. As the Italian walnut attains such a magnitude as to admit of being converted into a “lady’s companion,” this story may be received without dubitation. Callierates cut ants and other insects out of ivory, so fine, that their limbs could not be discerned by other people (which, by the way, is another convincing proof that there were no lenses then known to assist weak eyes). Myrmecides, famed for his performances in the same line, carved a quadriga that a fly covered with its wings, also a ship hid under those of a bee. And for the converse faculty, Varro recorded the name of a certain Strabo who, standing on Cape Lilybeum, could tell the number of the ships sailing out of Carthage, distant 135 miles.

† I possess some etchings, done by a person of my acquaintance without the assistance of a magnifier, in which the details of grasses, ferns, &c., growing on bits of ruined architecture, are made out with microscopic delicacy that rivals the perfection of Archæic-Greek glyptics. And, what bears directly upon the question, Dr. Billing states that most industrious engraver, Pistrucci, to the close of his long life, seventy-three years, never to have used spectacles at his work.



## ON THE FORMS OF ANTIQUE GEMS.

THIS point is of sufficient importance to our inquiry to claim a special notice, as in many cases (strange as it may appear to the uninitiated) the *form* supplies a trustworthy criterion of the date of the *work*, so invariably did the ancients assign particular modes of cutting to particular species of stones. For it is a rule almost without an exception, that the ancient lapidaries cut every coloured *transparent* stone, except the sard, into a more or less double-convex figure. It was probably on account of their original, time-honoured employment for bearing the signet-device on the *flat* base of the scarabæus, that the sard, and its congener, the banded agate, continued to be cut into planes; sometimes, though rarely, and in the later Roman period alone, having the upper one slightly convex. The *opaque* coloured stones, lapis-lazuli, the red and green jaspers, follow the same rule as the sard. When the original plan of cutting the sardonyx in transverse plane slices was abandoned, which was not before the full inauguration of the Roman school, the stone was fashioned into a very obtuse cone, with a small *table* at the summit, so as to present its strata horizontally, and to the best advantage for their colours, to the eye, instead of vertically, as the Etruscans and Grecians preferred to view them. The evident cause of the change was the almost exclusive employment of this



material for *camei*, then for the first time becoming the grand field for the exercise of the talents of the most eminent masters in the art. The sardonyx, not engraved, was often worn in the ring as a precious stone, merely for ornament, in this form; which, too, at the same time, as being the most fashionable of all, was occasionally adopted for the sard and the red jasper, though without the same reason.

Pliny has certain singular remarks, somewhat difficult to understand, upon the forms of gems that were most general in his day. First in favour says he was the *oblong*,\* meaning, doubtless, the long ellipse to be noticed in so many of the finest antiques. In the next degree stood the *lentile-shaped*, or the spherical much flattened on both sides; a pattern now known as "*cut en cabochon*,"† or by the homely but expressive term, "*tallow-drop*." Lessing has some very subtle speculations to account for the evident predilection for this pattern, which, as before remarked, the majority of the coloured transparent gems exhibit.‡ He ingeniously endeavours to prove that this configuration of the field both facilitated the engraving and assisted the perspective of the design, by bringing all the depths of the intaglio into the same horizontal plane. But the more probable motive is that the protuberant form of a coloured stone rendered it more ornamental when mounted in gold; besides the practical advantage that the projecting surface, forming a corresponding depression in the soft material then used for sealing with, so protected from effacement the impression of the signet-intaglio.§

Next to the lenticular, Pliny ranks the *cycloidal* outline, the

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\* There is another form confined to gems of the early Greco-Italian school, the almond, but having both ends equally pointed. It is well adapted for the designs placed upon it, single erect figures; the favourite stone for it being the dark agate.

† From "*Cabo*," a head.

‡ A plasma or a garnet cut to a plane face, will invariably prove to contain the work of a modern hand, however skilfully disguised.

§ It must also be remembered that all the Indian gems, except the diamond, known to the ancients, came to them in the shape of *beads* of different sizes. The double convex form, probably on this account, was regarded by them as the most natural.

popularity of which in the Augustan age is attested by the numerous specimens remaining: and last of all came the *circular*. "*Angular shapes are disliked,*" a fact shown by their rarity; for although we *do* meet with a few *square* gems, they belong to the talismanic class, and only date from the ages of the Decline. An *octangular* form is often to be seen in antiques that have been cut down for re-setting in Gothic times, when the octagon, for its importance as a *Masonic* symbol, had become the most popular of all figures. "*Stones with concave,\* or projecting surfaces, are considered inferior to those which have them smooth and even.*" To understand this, it is necessary to have seen in what manner the Romans employed the harder precious stones like the ruby and sapphire. We find that they never attempted to reduce them to any exact form, but set them retaining their native figure, to which the lapidary had contrived to give a certain degree of polish. Hence such a stone, if naturally presenting a regular shape, was much more sightly in ornamentation, than when, as more usually, it came in the awkward form of an irregularly rolled pebble. In Low Latin, such a sapphire went by the name of "*lupa*," in allusion, probably, to its *untamed* nature, as distinguishing it from one shaped by art, "*arte edomitus*." This native form being generally convex, the name got ultimately transferred to a magnifying lens; whence the French "*loupe*." The most valuable stones, as rude (except a slight polish) as when first picked up in the gravel of the Cingalese torrent, may be seen embellishing, rather by their intrinsic preciousness than by their still veiled beauty, the most important pieces extant of ancient jeweller's work, such as the Iron Crown, those of the Hispano-Gothic princes found at Guerrazar, and those of Charlemagne, and of Geisa, first king of Hungary. In fact, *native* spinels continued to be preferred to the *cut* for setting in jewellery as late as the middle of the 17th century, as De Laet has remarked at the time.

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\* The meaning of this is far from clear. Can it refer to the hollowing out the backs of carbuncles, in order to diminish the opacity and dark tinge of the stone?





## CYLINDERS—ASSYRIAN, BABYLONIAN, PERSIAN.

THESE, the most ancient form of the signet, are, for the most part, perfectly cylindrical stones, from one to three inches in length,\* and half as much in diameter. In a few, the form is varied into a barrel shape; in others, the converse appears, and the sides are slightly concave, like a dice-box. A large hole passes through their length, to admit a soft woollen cord, by means of which they were tied round the wrist like a bracelet. This accounts for their never having metal mountings when disinterred amongst Assyrian<sup>a</sup> remains, though found in such vast abundance. The very rare examples known, mounted in massy gold swivel-rings, prove by the hieroglyphics engraved upon them, that such were merely adaptations by the Egyptians to their national fashion of the swivel-mounted scarabeus, during the period their country was subject to the Persian rule.

A few words in testimony to this, according to modern notions, so strange a fashion of wearing the signet. Whenever signets are mentioned in the Old Testament, it is always as borne upon the

\* The respective magnitudes being regulated by the rank of the owner.

hand, not upon the finger. Thus (Gen. xxxviii. 18) Tamar demands her lover's "seal and twisted cord," *chotam* and *pethil*, falsely rendered "ring and bracelet." Again, Pharaoh takes the signet "off his own hand" and puts it upon that of Joseph. Jeremiah (xxii. 24) has: "The signet upon my right hand;" and Ecclesiasticus (xlix. 11), "Zorobabel, even he was as a signet on the right hand;" with many other similar allusions, all tending to prove the same thing. Thus the young Amalekite (2 Kings i. 10) brings to David, as the ensigus of royalty, taken off Saul's corpse, his diadem and bracelet, apparently because the latter contained the royal signet, the mere possession of which invested the holder with supreme power. In the catalogue of the treasury in the Acropolis, engraved on marble about the date of the Peloponnesian War (b. c. 431), and published by Chandler (Part II. No. iv. 2), are enumerated: "Two glass signets of different colours, set in gold, and having gold chains attached to them," a description showing them to be mounted as bracelets. Visconti (Op. Var. II. 1) gives a vase-painting, Jove seated on his throne, holding an eagle-tipped sceptre—itself an Assyrian distinction, as Herodotus records (i. 195)—and upon his wrist a large oval gem, a scarabeoid, tied around it by a fine cord—a mode this of carrying a convex stone much more convenient, as well as more natural, than the setting it in a swivel finger-ring, and moreover less exposing it to accidental injury. Pliny (xxxiii. 4) expressly states that the custom of wearing finger-rings was of no very ancient date, even in his days unknown to the East and to Egypt; and yet *signets* are, as we have seen, mentioned as in universal use in the most venerable of all historical records. Besides, when Herodotus notices, in the passage just quoted, that "each Babylonian has a signet," had he seen anything peculiar in their mode of wearing that signet, he certainly would have described it, according to his wont in all such cases. His silence shows, therefore, that the fashion still held its ground amongst the Greeks, for whom he was writing. That the Asiatic Greek scarabeoids were intended to be worn thus is plain from their appearance, they being frequently much too large for convenient use as swivel-rings: besides, they never retain



any trace of the metal axis so frequently remaining, fixed by its oxidation within the small scarabei. The most noble examples of the class known to me, are a scarabeoid (brought by M<sup>r</sup> Merli<sup>a</sup> from Athens) in lapis-lazuli,  $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1$  inch in size, engraved with a crouching Venus putting on her tunic, in the purest old style; and another in sappharine, of about equal size, found in Sicily, a Victory crowning a trophy, in the style of the coins of Agathocles (Brit. Mus.). In this mode, the engraved face of the stone being next the skin, was effectually protected from the dangers of wear and of accident.

The very large relative diameter of the hole through the axis of both cylinders and scarabeoids, conclusively demonstrates that they were intended to admit a thick and soft cord such as could be fastened about the wrist,\* without inconveniencing the wearer, and which, dyed of a bright hue, became an ornamental appendage. For example, the amethyst Lynx of the sorceress Nico (probably something of this form) is strung upon a yarn of purple lambswool, when dedicated to Venus (Anthol. v. 205).

That the Assyrian and Babylonian cylinders were never intended for metal settings, is an inference to be also deduced from the absence of all trace of metal within any one of the thousands brought to this country. The solitary example amongst Hertz's cylinders of one retaining its bronze axis, may confidently be put down to the same class as the rare exceptions already noticed set as swivel-rings in gold, an adaptation by a foreign race to their national usage. But had such an arrangement been known in Assyria, the cylinders would now turn up with their pivots oxidised and still remaining inside them, when made of baser metal, quite as frequently as do the Egyptian scarabei similarly fitted. Besides, all such stones, whether Egyptian or Etruscan, properly designed to turn upon a *metal* axis,

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\* It is possible that several strung together were used for a necklace by such as could afford the cost of so many works of the engraver. Such indeed seem to be the components (separated by spherical beads) of the necklaces of the gods and princes in the Assyrian sculptures. Some argument may be drawn from analogy—this is the use the Arab women put all the cylinders to that they can pick up in the ruins.

are bored with a very fine hole that barely admits the wire, for the sake of solidity; whereas cylinders, however small their external dimensions, have all an equally wide internal perforation, which, in the smaller specimens, often reduces their substance to such tenuity that unless the fastening passed through them had been soft and pliant yarn,\* they would have been extremely liable to split when applied to their use. Add to this, the heavier cylinders if fastened about the wrist with a wire, would have formed a painful and intolerable incumbrance to the wearer.†

We come now to the mode of using these singular implements. The *impression* of the signet engraved on the circumference was made by rolling it over a bit of pipeclay‡ (the *γῆ σφηματρικὴ* of the Greeks), laid upon the object to be secured, or attached by a ribbon to the document to be authenticated by the seal. This is the true source of Job's simile, "The heavens are turned as clay to the seal:" whereby he poetically likens the concave vault above, studded with the constellations, presenting to his mind so many fanciful shapes, to the surface of the clay spreading itself before the revolving cylinder into a hollow plain, covered with its strange devices of gods, heroes, and monsters.

When Layard first attempted to classify these primeval monuments of the glyptic art in their national and chronological order, he made those of his First Period to only coincide in date with the earliest sculptures of Nineveh; but subsequent discoveries, aided by the more perfect understanding of their cuneiform legends, have

\* Rawlinson ('Ancient Monarchies,' I. p. 111) figures the interior of a primitive Chaldean tomb at Mugheir (Ur), where the remains of string fastening the cylinder were yet visible around the arm bone of the deceased. These *Mortuary* cylinders are always blank; the real, engraved one, being the family seal, as a matter of course passed to the heir; its semblance sufficed for the purposes of the defunct.

† The smallest were sometimes mounted in gold swivel-rings of the Egyptian fashion. In the Waterton Collection is one of lapis-lazuli, set exactly in the style of the "Royal Signets," in gold, having a very massy shank tapering towards the points, and wrapped round for some distance with the stout wire that also forms the axis of the cylinder.

‡ Still the best material for taking clear impressions from cylinders; a thing impossible to effect with our sealing-wax.



carried back the antiquity of the instrument by more than a thousand years. The following classification may, therefore, be accepted as based upon tolerably secure data; and cylinders, judged by the form of the character used in their inscriptions, their styles of art, and their materials, may be assigned respectively to five periods.

I. The primitive Chaldean Empire in Lower Mesopotamia, extending from B.C. 2234 to 1675; its metropolis, Ur (Mugheir).

II. The Archaic-Babylonian Period, after the seat of government had been fixed at Babylon, about B.C. 1675.\*

III. The Early Assyrian, beginning some time after the foundation of Nineveh by Tiglath-Pileser I., about B.C. 1110, and ending with the fall of that city in B.C. 625.†

IV. The later Babylonian, from the re-establishment of that empire, until its destruction by Cyrus, from B.C. 625 to B.C. 536.

V. The Persian, under the Achæmenian dynasty, down to the Macedonian Conquest; from B.C. 536 to B.C. 330.

Of the *First Period*, the earliest recorded king is Uruk,‡ who reigned about B.C. 2090, and whose name is read, impressed in singularly bold and simple characters upon the bricks of his capitals, Mugheir, Warka. His signet has been recognised by Sir H. Rawlinson in the cylinder figured by Sir Ker Porter (II. pl. 79. 6.) The design is a bearded, flat-capped man, seated in a chair, and to whom another in the conical cap of Belus is presenting a young woman: behind her stands a female attendant, with hands raised in adoration. The draperies are wound *spirally* about the figures; one grand characteristic of the primitive style in these works. Three lines of neatly-cut letters contain the monarch's name and titles. Porter has not stated the material, and the present whereabouts of this invaluable monument is unknown. But the British Museum actually

\* Subverted by the Arabians, B.C. 1500, of whom followed a series of nine kings for 245 years, barbarian conquerors who have left no monuments.

† Babylonia remained in the insignificance to which the Arab conquest had reduced it for seven centuries and a half.

‡ The "pater Orchamus, seventh in descent from the primal Belus" of Ovid (Met. iv. 212).

possesses the signet of Uruk's son, Igli, engraved with the king paying his worship to a seated divinity, and inscribed with several lines, in a large and rudish lettering. It is formed of what seems black serpentine, partially calcined, about three inches long. This same easily-worked material is by far the most frequent one for these primitive seals, although jaspers, black and green, were occasionally employed, and the Museum has lately acquired a magnificent example in lapis-lazuli of the largest size, but unfortunately much defaced by wear. The designs upon this whole class are recognizable by their great simplicity; a man combating with some beast of chase being a special favourite.

In the *Archaic-Babylonian Period*,\* the designs continue much the same in their nature, but gradually admit of some multiplicity of details, and often a procession of several figures of the same height walks round the circumference. The peculiar material, almost the national one, of all Babylonian art, probably owing to local circumstances, is the loadstone (fibrous hæmatite), a black, hard, compact, oxide of iron, taking a very fine metallic polish, which it often has preserved unimpaired with wonderful pertinacity. The work, for the most part, has been executed with a tool having an obtusely angular edge, leaving deep parallel incisions, no doubt a fragment of the emery-stone, ἀκόννη, which down to the age of Theophrastus Armenia exported for the use of the Greek engravers.

During the *Early Assyrian Period*, and the long ages through which Nineveh grew and flourished as the capital of the Eastern world, the glyptic art, keeping pace with its sister, sculpture, attained to the highest point of *mechanical* perfection it ever reached in any age or country. Its materials are at first the serpentine, black, green, and red, but it speedily makes its own the harder and finer stones, syenite, jasper, agate, calcedony, and has left innumerable and im-

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\* Babylon, in place of Ur, had been made the capital by Naransin about B.C. 1750. The names of many of these kings are compounded with Sin = Lunus Deus. The names of fifteen kings of this series have been found on monuments. Berosus gives their complete number at sixty.



perishable records as to the true paternity of the most elegant of inventions. The subjects in the beginning are somewhat rudely done,\* and correspond with those of the most ancient bas-reliefs found at Nimroud (Nineveh); such as the king in his chariot discharging his arrows at the lion, or gigantic wild bull (*arnes*); warriors in combat; the king or the priest adoring the emblem of the Deity (the *Mir*, or winged orb in the heavens), or else the eagle-headed god, *Nisroch*; winged bulls and lions; all accompanied by the usual Assyrian symbols, the sun, the moon, the seven stars, the sacred tree (*Hom*, the Tree of Life) the winged orb, and the wedge. A very large cylinder in brownish calcedony, belonging to a king who reigned in the fifteenth century before our era, is a masterpiece of engraving. But nothing can exceed, in elaborate design and exquisite finish, that of Sennacherib himself, cut in amazonstone,† a material, from its brittleness, taxing all the skill of the most practised lapidary to master. It was found with another, in the same stone, but of finer quality, neither engraved nor bored, and which accompanies it in the showcase at the Museum. On this signet Sennacherib stands with his queen on either side of the Tree of Life, over which hovers the Visible Presence, bearing up on its wings two small busts, the genii (ferocious) of the worshippers. Similar acts of adoration are favourite subjects in this class. A remarkably elegant one of Layard's presents Astarte standing, backed by five stars, her crescent overhead, a seated dog, her regular attribute, in front; her worshipper is a lady, behind whom is a tree with an antelope browsing upon it.

As already remarked, these elaborate and highly finished engravings declare the perfection to which the glyptic art had been carried in Assyria, even before its very rudiments were known in Egypt—

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\* Especially in the conical stamps, which make their first appearance in this period; the figures being entirely made out by coarse drill holes, rudely assisted by straight incisions from the cutting material.

† Probably Pliny's 'Tanos,' a gem "of an unpleasing green, and *turbid* internally, coming from Persia, and foisted in amongst the emeralds," the opaque specimens of which it does in truth closely resemble. A cameo head of Antoninus Pius in oriental amazonstone actually passed in the Praun cabinet for done in emerald.

the country to which some writers have assigned the honour of its invention. For the contemporary Egyptian signets were cut with the graver, either in soft materials, limestone, steatohist, and baked clay; or, when of the highest class, in metal, like the "royal signets," some of which are still in existence.\* The fact is singularly attested by Layard's clay seal bearing the impressions of the signets of Sabao II. and Sennacherib; the first unmistakably produced from an engraving in metal, the second from a well-executed intaglio in stone—not a cylinder, but a conical stamp of the form to be hereafter considered in its due place.

Of the *Later Babylonian Period*,† the cylinders are by far the most numerous of all in European collections, owing to our much more familiar and long-standing intercourse with the region that furnishes them to the Arab diggers in the ruins. Amongst their materials the loadstone still predominates, followed in frequency by the brown calcedony; but almost every other species of "hard stones" was adopted, according to the taste of the artist or his employer. The subjects are the same as upon the later Ninevitic, except that the god is now often crowned with a feathery conical tiara, but they are discriminated by their legends, now a constant adjunct, cut in the peculiar, highly-complex, and neat Babylonian alphabet.‡ Many of these exhibit admirable workmanship: one figured by Layard, with the Assyrian Hercules wrestling with a buffalo (true prototype

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\* The most characteristic example being the swivel-ring of king Horus, a.c. 1327, weighing no less than five ounces.

† The works of this period are not meant to be restricted within the eighty-eight years only that bound the duration of the Second Babylonian Empire after its restoration by Nabopolassar, a.c. 625. A large proportion of the Babylonian cylinders must necessarily be undistinguishable in style from the Ninevitic, for Tiglath-Nin, the Assyrian, reconquered that city from the Arabs as early as a.c. 1270, whenceforward it became a dependency of Nineveh, and ruled by kings of that nation. Though Babylon often took the opportunity to revolt, and to become independent for long intervals together, yet it was as frequently reduced to vassalage. Thus after enjoying liberty from a.c. 880, it was reconquered by Sargon, a.c. 709; and, after a fresh revolt, by Sennacherib.

‡ A frequent decoration here is the *guilloche*, or open chain-border, exactly as it appears on the best executed Etruscan scarabei.



of the Grecian with the bull of Crete), and the human-headed bull, (or Minotaur) engaging the lion, is distinguished by the spirit of the design, and the deep cutting of the intaglio. But the highest perfection of Babylonian art displays itself on a cylinder in green jasper, brought from the East nearly a century back, and discovered by myself buried in a small private collection of very miscellaneous gems (Bosanquet, Monmouth). Its exceptional merit calls for a detailed description. Belus, in his national tiara, arrayed in a long "Babylonish garment," the *candys*, and seated on his throne, holds out the rod and circle, ensigns of royalty, towards his worshipper. His footstool is the man-headed bull, *couchant*; over his head are the sun and moon conjoined, those regular concomitants of the figure of a divinity in all Oriental art. The owner of the signet, *crowned* and *robed* exactly like his god, approaches with an offering, a lamb under his arm, and is followed by his wife, with her hands elevated in supplication. Then come the man-headed Priapean bull, and a second female figure, both standing motionless, with their hands laid upon their breasts—still the Eastern gesture of respect and submission: they probably represent the guardian genii of the two votaries. The drawing of the figures is admirable, the execution beyond all description masterly, fully equalling that of the finest Etruscan scarabei, to which indeed the work, in all points, presents a most surprising resemblance.

*Myllitta*, in whom the Greeks recognised their Aphrodite, now often makes her appearance, with long, dishevelled hair, and arms extended, streaming with water. This type, made familiar to the Greeks, by its appearance on the signets of the Persian satraps, may have suggested to their fertile fancy, in the ignorance of its true meaning, the bit of historical romance recorded by Polyænus (vii. 27). "When Queen Rhodogune was in the bath, news was brought to her of the revolt of certain of the subject nations. She rushed forth to quell the rebels, vowing never to finish dressing until she had so done. In memory of which, the royal signet of the Persian kings bears the figure of Rhodogune, with her hair all dishevelled."

In another place, he repeats the same legend, only referring it to Semiramis.\*

The latest of this long line, boasting as it does a continuous existence of two thousand years, are the *Persian*. Their material is every possible variety of quartz, from the amethyst to the sardonyx, the most beautiful of all being the sapphirine, or "azure Phrygian jasper," of which the choicest specimens are to be found in the cylinders and cones† of Achæmenian date. The legends, containing as before the names of the owner, his father, and patron-god, are common adjuncts, and are written in another and final modification of the cuneiform lettering.‡ They may, besides, be often distinguished by their *barrel* shape, the precise converse of that commonly affected by the Babylonian, which grow slightly smaller towards the middle. That most venerable historical relic, now in the British Museum, the signet of Darius Hystaspis himself, is a cylinder three inches long, in opaque white calcedony, representing the monarch in his car, with the inscription in three vertical columns, translated, "I Darius the king."

The Persian style is easily recognised by the drapery of the figures being gathered up into straight narrow folds, as seen in the

\* The fortunes of the glorious but short-lived Second Babylonian Empire are clearly pictured in Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the Image, if interpreted by the rules of common sense and history. The several metals composing it symbolize, Daniel plainly tells us, as many successive *reigns*, not *kingdoms*, as our prophecy-loving divines render the word. The gold is Nebuchadnezzar's prosperous reign, lasting forty-four years, the golden age of the dynasty. The silver, the two years of his inactive son, Evil-Merodach. The brass, the four unhappy years of his son-in-law, Neriglassar. The iron, the few months of tyranny of his grandson, the murdered Laboroesarchod, with whom ends the line of Nebuchadnezzar. The iron and clay united the usurper Nabonadus, who, hard beset, takes for his partner in the kingdom, Belshazzar, a scion of the royal line. "In the time of *these kings*" comes down the rock from the Persian hills, Cyrus, and pulverizes the Babylonian monarchy.

† Which latter form now largely preponderates for private signets.

‡ The Assyrian alphabet was *syllabic*, and therefore consisted of above three hundred distinct characters, and the maximum of the wedges going to form one letter was as high as sixteen. But the Persians skilfully converted this alphabet into a representative of *sounds* only, thereby reducing the number of its letters to thirty-seven, and the maximum of wedges in any one to no more than five. But between the Assyrian and the Persian there intervened a modified syllabic alphabet of about one hundred sounds, which was used to the last in the bilingual inscriptions of the Achæmenidæ.



sculptures belonging to the Achaemenian dynasty; a peculiar treatment never found on the preceding Assyrian and Babylonian monuments. The spiral arrangement of the wrapper on the Archaic-Babylonian has been already pointed out. In the two subsequent periods the robe is fringed, and folds over longitudinally in front of the person exactly as it is represented in the Nimroud bas-reliefs. Other marks of distinction are the crown on the head of the royal personage, which now becomes a turban surrounded with rays; the figure of Ormuzd soaring in the heavens, here first introduced; and the fantastic monsters, the very counterpart of those decorating the walls of Persepolis. A crystal cylinder (Layard) representing Ormuzd raised aloft by two human-headed, winged bulls (true ancestors of the Jewish cherubim), above a cartouche inclosing the portrait of the sovereign, is a work conspicuous for its delicacy and high finish.

This form of the signet was to some extent adopted by other nations subject to the Babylonian or Persian rule. Those of Egyptian *fabrique* have been already noticed; others exist that are indubitably Phœnician. But of all this class, none is so full of interest as that formerly No. 407 in the Hertz collection, exhibiting, as it does, the first essays of Greek glyptic art under the dictation of the Persian. On a calcedony cylinder a warrior equipped in Carian helmet, Argolic shield and thorax, is about to fall transfixed by the spear of an adversary, likewise in complete body-armour, but wearing, instead of helmet, the Persian *cidaris*. In the field soars the *Mir*, the winged orb emblem of the divine presence and protection; attesting that this remarkable design commemorates the victory of some Persian satrap (it may be of Harpagus himself, Cyrus' lieutenant) over the Greeks of Ionia; this being one of those rare cases in which "the lion has drawn the picture."

Cylinders went out of use in Persia upon the Macedonian conquest, and never reappear either under the Arsacidæ or the Sassanians, being superseded by the conical seals, which, indeed, had begun to come into use under the first Ninevite monarchy, as the example above quoted demonstrates.

A few cylinders, though Assyrian as regards the designs, are inscribed with Semitic characters resembling the Phœnician. Such belong to various periods, from the times of the Lower Assyrian dynasty to the Persian occupation of Babylonia. To the first date Layard assigns one engraved with two human-headed bulls elevating the emblem of the deity above the Sacred Tree, flanked by the priest bringing a goat, and by the worshipper, behind whom is the legend—reading vertically. Of Persian date is another, the king in conflict with a bull and a gryphon: above him soars the figure of Ormuzd. The legend in four lines reads “the seal of Gadshirat, son of Artadati,” as the name and patronymic have been deciphered by Lévy.

A few of the types that most frequently occur may here\* be specified and explained. The man in combat with a monster clearly alludes to the perpetual conflict between the good and evil Principles, that fundamental doctrine of the Persian religion. Two human-headed bulls, fighting with two lions. Four human figures, between the first and second is a tree, between the third and fourth an antelope, under which are three balls. A figure in a long robe holding out at arm's length two antelopes by the horns is a common type on the cones also: probably the seal of a *Magus*, to infer from Sakyat's injunction, to be quoted when we come to consider the Indian works. A man fighting with the human-headed bull (first source of the Grecian Theseus and the Minotaur, of Hercules and the Achelous); another man on his knees adores a god in the human form standing before him. Man holding a sceptre, another his hand raised in adoration; a tree stands between the two. A procession of men variously attired, apparently engaged in some religious rite.† But the variety of types is endless, every individual having evidently laboured to make his own device as far as possible peculiar, and readily

\* For the attribution of the symbols of the several deities, see p. 53.

† In the legends an eight-rayed star precedes the name of each deity, who has likewise a *numeral* of his own, and which often serves as a substitute for his full name; thus, Deus Lunus = 30, Sol = 20, Bel = 50. Moreover, the gods were represented by true hieroglyphics, a Maltese cross, an altar, a lozenge within another, two horns joined in one line, &c., symbols of the same nature as Hindoo caste-marks.



distinguishable from those of his fellow citizens. Some of the designs evidently commemorate glorious exploits of the owner, or some ancestor; processions of captives, severed heads of enemies, occupying the field; valuable historical documents no doubt, concerning "mighty men which were of old, men of renown."

But no series of monuments is so rich in illustrations of religious ideas, and a careful study of these designs will clear up many a difficulty as to the source of many a strange fable or figure in the archaic mythology of the Greeks, and indicate the true fountain-head of old Helladic art.

Certain drawbacks to their utility as pictorial records unfortunately exist, which have deterred the learned from deriving from this class much of the information it is calculated to afford.\* The first of these obstacles is the apparent rudeness of the intagli, which are often nearly obliterated by ancient wear, and the injuries of time, when cut in the softer stones, the lapis-lazuli, serpentine, and calcareous minerals. In fact, in these, the signets of the million, the engraving was necessarily cheaply and expeditiously done; the figures are sunk into the stone by *filing* it away as it were, with a sharp piece of emery. But far otherwise is it with the self-declared signets of the king and the noble, such as those already noticed, or that truly royal seal, once in the Fould Collection, a sapphirine calcedony, presenting us with the monarch in his car. Its style reminds the numismatist so forcibly of certain Greek coins, that it may with probability be assigned to some Ionian artist in the service of the later Persian kings. Their court was an asylum for all adventurers of the Hellenic race; the royal physician was by preference summoned from Greece, like Democedes and Ctesias;† doubtless the professors of all the arts of luxury met

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\* One great hindrance to the study is the difficulty of obtaining distinct impressions of their engraved surfaces in order to have a complete view of the designs. For this purpose sealing-wax is altogether useless; the only resource is to revert to the actual medium for which these gems were intended, and to roll them, after oiling, upon soft pipe-clay. This takes a beautiful impression, and, after hardening by heat, preserves the same imperishably.

† And Hippocrates himself, who, however, declined the honour, with its enormous salary.

there with ample patronage, exactly as the Great Mogul's court in the seventeenth century swarmed with Italian architects and jewellers, and that of the Sublime Porte with Frank charlatans of every sort in our own times.

Cylinders are picked up in great numbers by the Arabs in the ravines annually cut by the winter rains through the ruins of the mud-built cities of their original possessors. As these torrents annually wash fresh portions of the mounds, formerly constituting alike palaces and cottages, the supply continues inexhaustible. Before the influx of travellers opened a lucrative market for their disposal, the Arab women used to string them upon their necklaces, to serve the double purpose of beads and of talismans.

It has been stated above that this peculiar form was never revived in its native home upon the restoration of the national sovereignty and religion, yet something of the kind seems to have lingered in Egypt. Witness the Hertz plasma,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch long, surrounded by a double procession of the gods of that country unusually well engraved, the sacred animals below;\* and another, though much smaller, in the Praun Collection, engraved with Anubis, the serpent-headed goddess, and other symbols belonging to the Alexandrian Gnosis.†

Before dismissing the subject, notice must be taken of a curious ornament occasionally brought to this country from the same localities that furnish the memorials we have been examining, and which are purchased by credulous antiquaries as a rare variety of Babylonian cylinder, adorned with "tree-writing." These are tubes, so to speak, in brown agate, two or three inches long by one in diameter; their circumference engraved with rude figures of trees, and the lines filled in with gold, exactly in the same manner as the turquoises similarly adorned with Persian legends, so much admired as ring-stones in that region. These pretended cylinders, by their polish,

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\* First in the Stewart Collection.

† The finest specimen of the rare sap-green jasper known to me is a seven-sided prism, bored through the axis,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  long, rudely engraved on each face with Egyptian gods or Gnostic legends, formerly Hertz's, now in the British Museum.



betray their recent origin—for, what purpose designed I have been unable to ascertain, but suspect as beads for native necklaces, since it is known the antique, whenever found, continue to be put to that use. The “tree-writing” is merely the rude attempt at arabesques by a hand incompetent to form curves in so intractable a material; such being the only ornamentation that the religion permits.

To conclude with the description of a unique relic in which the form hallowed by the traditions of the remotest antiquity has been applied to exhibit the mysteries of the Christian faith. No. 274 in the Paris Cabinet is a cylinder in glass paste,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch long, presenting *in relief* twelve scenes from the life of Christ, arranged in two rows in the following order.—1. The Annunciation. 2. The Visitation, inscribed  $\overline{\text{MP}} \overline{\text{OY}}$ . 3. The Manger. 4. Effaced, inscribed  $\overline{\text{MP}} \overline{\text{OY}}$ , probably the Flight into Egypt. 5. The Baptism in Jordan, inscribed  $\overline{\text{IC}} \overline{\text{XC}}$ . 6. The Transfiguration. The second row consists of:—1. The Entrance into Jerusalem. 2. The Flagellation. 3. The Crucifixion. 4. The Entombment. 5. The Resurrection. 6. The Angel appearing to the Magdalene. Chabouillet considers it as anterior to the eighth century, and made in Mesopotamia, the original country of that form for gems. The fact of this specimen being a paste, shows that there existed a regular manufactory of the kind, otherwise the mould for casting them would have been unnecessary. The figures being in relief show this cylinder to have been a mere ornament, probably like the examples last noticed, for stringing upon a necklace.





#### BABYLONIAN AND ASSYRIAN DEITIES.\*

THE following attempt to distinguish the various deities of Nineveh and Babylon is unfortunately to a great extent merely conjectural, so little having been preserved to us by the extant historians concerning the native names or the attributes of these ancient divinities, immortalized in their engraved effigies upon the cylinders and the cones.

*Belus* is figured with bull's horns, wearing an erect tiara surmounted by a globe. He is armed with a trident, or an *axe*, and stands upon the back of a bull, or wild goat. His dress is a long and full tunic. Sometimes he appears seated on a throne, and holding the bull by the horn. Occasionally his attributes are the thunderbolt and caduceus. This was the idol described by Baruch (vi. 14): "He hath a sceptre in his hand, as the judge of the country . . .; he hath also in his hands a sword and an *axe*," &c.

*Mylitta* (Venus) is seated on a throne with a crown in her hand,

\* Most of these deities were Primitive Chaldean, and introduced into Assyria when that country formed part of the First Babylonian Empire.



and rests her feet upon Capricorn. A star and dove are her usual attributes.

*Parsondas*, the god of war and the chase, is figured as a eunuch wearing a pointed cap, holding a knife or sword, and with one foot raised upon a footstool.

*Anaitis* (Venus) is seen naked, and in front, standing upon the Egyptian hieroglyph for gold, a basin. Later, *Anabid* is the female Ized presiding over the same planet.

The *Dove* was employed as a religious symbol in the most remote ages, and amongst the most ancient nations of the world. The fabulous *Semiramis*, whose epoch is anterior to the very earliest of these monuments, according to one account derived her name from the *dove* in Assyrian.\* According to another tradition she was changed into this bird on her departure from mankind (Diod. Sic. Ovid). Even in the age of Augustus the dove was held sacred in Palestine. "*Alba Palæstino sacra columba Syro*," says the learned Propertius. Hence the adoption of the form, handed down to our times, as the most holy of symbols. It is curious to observe how the modern disciples of Zoroaster have retained the notion that it is in this very shape the Supreme Being still manifests himself to mortal eyes, as appears from the story in Tavernier (i. p. 490), of the Khan of Kerman, who insisted upon seeing the sacred fire preserved in the famous Parsee temple there. Being disappointed at the sight of only an ordinary flame, having expected to behold some miraculous light, he began

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\* "Between the Syrian Goddess and Jupiter stands another figure in gold, totally different from all other statues, having no form of its own, but bearing that of all the other gods. It is called by the Assyrians themselves *the image*, but they give it no name, nor any account of its origin. Some suppose it to be Bacchus, some *Deucalion*, some *Semiramis*; in fact, there is a golden *dove* standing upon its head, for which reason they fable it to be the figure of *Semiramis*" (De Syr. Dea., 33). Doubtless it was the same attribute, the dove, that caused its attribution to *Deucalion*, our Greek's evident equivalent for the Chaldean *Noah*. The "*Dea Syria*," or great goddess of Edessa, was in Plutarch's age identified with Venus, with Isis, and with Nature, on the Principle creating all life out of moisture. She was in truth the old Chaldean *Beltis*—*Mylitta*, whose usual title in the cuneiform legends is "Mother of the great gods." Her numeral is 15, Chaldean *Ri*, whence probably came the Greek *Rhea*, with whom some identified the goddess of Hierapolis.

to swear and to spit upon it, whereupon it vanished in the bodily shape of a white dove. It was only induced to return (and in the same shape), by dint of prayer and almsgiving on the part of the priests and congregation.

*Nebo*, the Chaldean Mercury, has a beard, is clad in a long tunic, which leaves his right knee uncovered, and rests one foot upon a lion. He carries a caduceus.

*Nergal*, bearded and bare-headed, has the legs and tail of a cock; or is figured as a man with a cock's head.

*Bel-Itan* and *Dagon* are bearded figures, terminating in fishes' tails.

*Oannes*\* wears a turreted tiara, has one leg of a man, the other in the form of a fish, and carries the sacred basket in his hand.

The *Hom*, or Sacred Tree, is introduced into many of these groups, and often forms the principal object, with sphinxes, human-headed bulls, or wild-goats, rampant on each side like heraldic supporters.

On stones of Persian date, *Ormuzd* himself,† or more probably the Ferouer, or *Angel*, of the king, soars in a crescent above the Tree of Life, to whom a figure below offers adoration.

*Hercules Gigon*, a grotesque figure crowned with reeds, standing erect, carries by the tail a couple of struggling lions. The diminutive grotesque figures so frequently introduced have been supposed to represent the Phœnician Pataic gods, which they used to set in the prows of their ships, and which Herodotus (iii. 37), compares to the figures of the Pygmies.

The Greeks have left us scanty notices even of the deities worshipped by the last Babylonians, so that the identification of their figures engraved on these cylinders is in great measure conjectural. Herodotus only mentions Mylitta, or Venus, and Belus, whom he identifies with Jupiter, of whom he saw a large seated statue in the famous Temple, apparently differing in nothing from the commonly received Greek type of the god, inasmuch as he does not

\* The Greek version of *Hoa*, "the god of waters." His symbol is the wedge, as being the inventor of the cuneiform alphabet, and also the erect serpent.

† Copied identically from the type of Asshur in the Assyrian sculptures, whose attribute is similarly the *Hom* tree.



specify any striking peculiarity in the representation, which, according to his custom in such cases, he would otherwise have done. The shrine upon the summit of the temple contained no idol, being inhabited by the god himself, in person, spiritually.

But the account Diodorus gives of the same temple (ii. 9) is wonderfully embellished by the travellers' tales accumulated during the intervening four centuries, and when the utter ruin of the building had rendered all confutation impossible. He himself owns the impossibility of attaining to the truth, from the great discrepancy of the descriptions then current. But he places upon the summit three hammer-wrought golden statues, of Belus, Juno, and Rhea—the first erect and striding, forty feet high, and weighing a thousand talents: Juno, a standing figure, holding a serpent fastened round her head in her right hand, a sceptre set with gems in her left: Rhea, of equal weight with Belus, seated, two lions stood upon her knees, and at her side were two huge serpents of silver. Before the three was set a common table, supporting two goblets and two craters of incredible weight. But all these treasures had fallen a prey to the covetousness or necessities of the later Persian kings, who, be it remembered, were not image worshippers. Xerxes, relates Herodotus, had set the example by appropriating a statue of solid gold, twelve cubits high. But this was the figure of a monarch, not of a god (for it is termed *ἀνδρίας*, whilst that of Belus is *ἄγαλαμα*), and stood in the sacred enclosure, not within the temple itself, and may well have been that statue of Nebuchadnezzar, the mag-

\* Her priests offered fishes as the daily sacrifice to the great goddess Atargatis, whom Macrobius considers as synonymous with the Earth, and persons making vows to her, dedicated figures of fish in gold or silver (Athen. viii. 346). The Greeks accounted for this by an *ex post facto* fiction that she (a tyrannical queen) and her son Ichthys (*i. e.* Dag), had been drowned by order of their conqueror, Mopsus the Lydian, in the lake near Ascalon. Another tradition, preserved by Manilius (iv. 582), related how Venus (Anaitis) in the war with the giants assumed this shape:—

“For when she plunged beneath Euphrates' waves,  
A fish's form the flying Venus saves,  
Scaping the furious Typhon, giant dread,  
With serpent legs, with dragon-wings outspread.”

nitude of which is so unreasonably exaggerated by Jewish tradition to the height of three score cubits.

Still later Macrobius (i. 23) describes the supreme deity of the Assyrians, called Adad, "one," his head surrounded with rays pointing downwards, expressive of the force of heaven in the solar rays shot down into the earth. He is attended by a goddess, Atargatis, crowned with rays pointing upwards, symbolizing the upward shooting of the products of the earth. Both statues are supported by figures of lions.

Agathias quotes Berosus, to the effect that the Assyrian gods were identical with the Grecian, differing but in name; as Sandes for Hercules, and Anaitis for Venus; and existing monuments show plainly enough that these Oriental idols finding their way through Ionia, or Phœnicia, or Cyprus, served for models to the primitive Grecian image-makers.

Identification of subjects will be facilitated by a list of symbols of Chaldean and Assyrian deities. (Rawlinson.)

Asshur, the supreme god: bust of man holding a bow, borne up in the winged circle: his attribute is the Hom tree.

Shamas, Sol: a four-rayed star (Maltese Cross). Gula (his wife): an eight-rayed star in a circle.

Sin, *Lunus* deus: a man holding a staff, standing on a crescent; or the crescent alone.

Nergal, god of war: a lion, or androsphinx.

Nin, of hunting: the Babylonian Hercules; the winged bull.

Iva, or Vul, of thunder, holds a rod, whence issue three zig-zag rays.

Belus wears the horned cap.

Beltis—Mylitta, "the great mother," is represented by a woman suckling, as Isis.

Bel-Merodach is probably the very frequent figure holding a short sceptre and marching forwards, as Diodorus describes the statue of Belus.

The badge of royalty is a torques, on which are strung, like charms, the emblems of Sin, Shamas, Gula, Belus, and Iva.





## CONES AND HEMISPHERICAL SEALS.

STONES thus shaped were gradually usurping the place of the Oriental signet under its most ancient form, the cylinder, even during the times of the Achæmenidæ, and entirely superseded the same when their empire with their old religion was restored by the vigorous race of the Sassanidæ, in the third century. On this account all are indiscriminately termed Sassanian seals (though belonging to epochs so widely remote), from the appellation of the dynasty to which, in truth, the vast majority of them are to be assigned. The line commences with *Artashir* or *Artaxerxes*, "the blacksmith," a lineal descendant of the last *Darius*, who overthrew the Parthian empire, A.D. 226, and ends with *Yezdigerd III.* in A.D. 632, when the Arab invasion put a stop to the engraving of figures. Their dynastic appellation comes from *Saansaan*, the Roman mode (as we see from *Ammian*) of spelling *Shaanshaan*, "the king of kings," the title in all ages, and even now, assumed by the Persian monarch. It is not, as historians absurdly repeat, a family name derived from an imaginary ancestor, *Sasan*.

These stamps are found in great numbers in the ground about *Bassora* and *Bagdad*, places which, under the second Persian monarchy,

held the same rank as Ecbatana and Babylon under the ancient; and by their abundance, coupled with the almost total absence of every other form of signet-gem, bear witness to the accuracy of Pliny's remark (xxxiii. 6): "The greatest part of the nations, and of mankind, even of those subject to our rule, have no *signet-rings* at all."

Their material is far from admitting so many varieties of stones as the later cylinders present. We find a few in red and green jaspers, agate, and sard, but fully nine-tenths are in calcedony, the smoky, the sapphirine,\* and the white. The obvious preference shown to the last sort, more especially for those seals honoured with the royal image and superscription, affords reason for considering this to represent Pliny's *Thelycardios*—"Colore candido Persas apud quos gignitur magnopere delectat, *Muls* eam appellant." The Persian name is clearly their *Malka*, "king;" and the Greek, "woman's heart," alludes to the usual cordiform shape of the native calcedony.

On the examination of a collection of many examples, it will be found that the earliest class, agreeing both as to subjects and style with the Lower Assyrian cylinders as regards their intagli, are shaped like obtuse cones, frequently cut with eight sides, so as to make the signet an octagon; probably then, as in the middle ages, a form replete with hidden virtues. The obtuse cone is the exact form of the Hindoo *Lingam*, that most ancient symbol of the active generative power, Siva or Change—the origin of the obelisk, of the phallus erected on sepulchres, and of its last form, the more decorous *stèle*. Again, the cone was the universally received type of the penetrating solar ray, an analogy sufficient to recommend this form to the worshippers of Mithras. Thus the black conical stone of Emesa, whose high-priest was the Emperor Elagabalus, is figured on his coins with the legend "*Sacerdos dei Solis*."

Such octagonal seals may be assigned, for the most part, to the times of the first Ninevitic and Persian monarchies,† i. e., before the

\* Which often is so fine in colour as almost to pass for a pale sapphire. Its tint explains the "*ceruleum Phrygian iaspis*" of Marcellus Empiricus.

† It is now generally agreed that this form of the signet was devised at Nineveh



Macedonian conquest; and some, possibly, to those who held fast to the old religion and usages during the four centuries of the Parthian usurpation. They have a small hole drilled through the upper part, to admit a string for hanging them about the neck, the regular mode in those times of carrying the signet. In very fine specimens, probably designed for princely use, a groove passes round the apex of the cone, terminating in the usual holes, which only enter the stone to a slight depth, evidently once holding a thick loop of gold, as a more secure as well as ornamental mode of attachment. Such a loop still remains in a pyramidal stamp of serpentine (No. 972, Paris) discovered on the field of Marathon, and thus throwing a light upon the antiquity of this fashion.

When inscriptions do occur on these early stamps of the First Period, it is invariably in a Semitic character, the oldest form of the Punic alphabet, never in the cuneiform, nor even in the latest of the Persian characters, the Pehlevi.

The *Sassanian* proper are oblate spheres, with about one-third of the body ground flat to afford a field for the intaglio, and perforated through the middle with a large hole. This perforation is often so considerable relatively as to reduce the seal to the appearance of a bulky finger-ring, which no doubt inspired the later Romans with the idea of the crystal rings they were so fond of, as well as becoming the prototype of the agate and calcedony rings yet common in the East. In the more carefully executed specimens the sides are carved into concentric curves; in some cases thus, perhaps designedly, giving the contour of the shank the appearance of a turban. The seal so adorned in my possession is the best executed piece in this style known to me. Its device is three rosebuds springing from one stem, and the legend, most

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about the ninth century before our era, and did not become popular at *Babylon* before that city had become the capital of the *Achæmenidæ*. The *scarabæoid*, or simple ellipse, perforated through the axis, was sometimes adopted. Amongst Major *Pearse's* gems (from the Punjab) I observed an immense one in dark agate, bearing an unmistakably Babylonian *Ashtaroth* and her worshippers. The same form also continued in use amongst the *Sassanians*, especially in the case of the onyx, probably suggested by the fact of that material being usually imported in the shape of *fakirs' beads*.

elegantly cut, gives the name and titles of Varanes, "Vahrahran Shah." On another (formerly Hertz's), where the sides are thus embellished with concentric curves, is presented a very interesting figure of the queen in full dress, with flowing diadem, hanging scarf, and Chinese sleeves, her robe full of plaits falling over her feet in a thick roll, indicating the richness and weight of its silk brocade. By her side stands the infant prince. The legend gives her name—"Armin-dochti;" *dochti*, "daughter," having a special meaning of "princess" in Persia, exactly as "infanta" now in Spanish, to denote the daughter of the kingdom, par excellence. Similarly *Shahpuhri* properly means the "king's boy," i. e., the prince.\* It may therefore be suspected that the very numerous portraits bearing this latter title do not all necessarily belong to one of the three kings so called, but to different sons of their respective families.

These hemispherical seals continued in use for some time after the Arabian conquest, since they are found with nothing upon them except a Cufic legend giving the owner's name, after the usual Mohammedan fashion. There is an example in a fine sard, in my possession. But they were speedily superseded by ring-stones of the usual form mounted in silver finger or thumb rings, of which numbers exist, going back to the first ages of the Caliphate.

The engravings upon these stamps are extremely heavy in design and rudely executed—never to be compared to the work seen upon the better class of cylinders. The sole exception known to me is an octagonal cone in the purest sapphirine (once A. Fould's), the intaglio a Hermes, only recognizable by his caduceus and winged boots, for he bears a lotus in his hand, and is closely draped in a long gown, *candys*, with a hanging pallium—a singular Oriental rendering of this Hellenic deity. On his head he wears the Persian *cidaris*, or tiara, at his feet is an eagle. The work is peculiarly neat, but altogether archaic, and

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\* The Saxon "conunk," *king*, had originally the same meaning; and "childe" even now is an archaic synonym for "knight." The shah's image on a gem may always be known by the tiara he wears. All other portraits, constituting the vast majority, though inscribed with regal names, represent either the innumerable princes of the blood, or perhaps government officials.



may be assigned to some prince of the semi-Greek nations on the coast of Asia Minor. The apex of the cone has been deeply grooved for the reception of a massy gold shank to support the ring from which it depended.

This is the place to remark that we are not left in doubt as to the use of these stamps. They explain it of themselves; the actual manner of wearing the seal being conspicuously exhibited upon a noble specimen in sard (Brit. Mus.), proclaiming itself by its clearly-cut legend, "The attestation of Sapor, fire-priest of the Hyræans." In this, a large spherical object, which can be nothing else than a stone (its magnitude far exceeding the biggest pearl ever found), is seen suspended by a short cord about the prelate's neck, and above the long string of pearls that falls down over his bust. A hooked fastening at the ends of the cord seems also to be indicated, allowing of the facile disengagement of the seal whenever its services were required. But our great authority on Sassanian customs, E. Thomas, adduces a passage from the 'Shah Nameh' allusive to a different fashion, where the hero is directed to bequeath his seal to his child, if a girl, to be worn in her hair, but if a boy, in the bracelet upon his arm. Such directions at once elucidate the destination of those exceptionally large flattened disks (unpierced) in amethyst, sard, and nicolo, on which the more important portraits invariably occur. The great had invented this plan for converting the signet into a personal decoration, whilst the commonalty adhered to the primitive fashion of stringing it on a cord tied round the neck. But royalty maintained also the antique usage. A close inspection of the shah's image often discovers a similar appendage to that of the above-quoted Fire-priest, and the matter-of-fact Oriental artist could never have omitted so essential a badge of sovereignty as the royal signet from his "counterfeit presentment" of the King of kings.

The lately-cited writer, in his highly instructive memoir upon the great Devonshire amethyst ('Num. Chron.' for 1866, p. 242), quotes Masaudi to the effect that Nushirwan had in use *four* different seals, with separate devices and legends; and that Khosru Parviz employed

no fewer than nine for the various departments of the state: "He had nine seals which he employed in the affairs of the kingdom. The first was a ring of diamond, the head whereof was formed out of a red *ruby*! on which was cut the portrait of the king, the legend having the king's titles. This was put upon letters and diplomas. The second was a gold ring set with a cornelian, upon which were engraved the words 'Khorasan khudah,' 'King of Khorasan.' It served for the state archives." The first-mentioned arrangement is clearly connected with Nushirwan's division of his empire into *four* provinces—Assyria, Media, Persia, Bactriana, each presided over by a vizier, who, of course, had an official seal of his own assigned to him.

But to resume our notice of the art and execution of these later Persian intagli, it must be confessed that, in general, both are equally *barbaric*; cut by means (as its traces show) of a single coarse wheel, the figures formed by the repetition of equal lines, occasionally assisted by the application of a blunt-pointed drill. No traces are visible of the use of the diamond-point, nor that high polish so marked a peculiarity of the Greek and Roman intaglio-work. To give some idea of their designs, I subjoin a few of those most frequently repeated upon their faces, premising that *deities* never are figured upon these signets of the iconoclast, idol-hating Persians, to whose race this peculiar pattern of the seal undoubtedly owed its origin.—A priest praying before an altar; a priest sacrificing at a fire-altar; a winged genius holding a flower; a winged human-headed horse; the human-headed bull; lion with scorpion's claws and serpent-tail, a tree behind him; Capricorn and a star above; with a vast variety of similar astrological devices, as might be expected where the Magi formed the established church. The national standard—a crescent supported on a tripod, with the legend, "Afsud direfesh," "Long live the royal banner"—is so frequent, that it may be supposed the usual seal for a military officer. The fantastic animals, Pegasi, sphinxes, busts of lions and tigers, wild goats and antelopes, which form the subjects upon a large majority, at least in the late Sassanian period, exhibit often a truly Chinese taste in their drawing. And there is a wonderful similarity between



many of their animals and the same as figured on the Gallic or British coins. Thus a cornelian stamp bearing a horse, a wild boar in the field below, from its exact identity with a well-known *potin* coin-type found in Jersey, made me long delude myself with the idea of having discovered the genuine work of some Gallic Pyrgoteles as yet uninfluenced by Roman instruction in his art. The Mithraic bull, always represented as the humped Brahminee,\* whose Zend name, signifying *Life*, makes it the emblem of the *Earth*, is very frequent, and always in a *couchant* posture. One, on a fine almandine (a ring-stone in my collection), is interesting from its legend, "Rast Shah-puhri," "*The Just Sapor*"—an epithet curiously illustrated by the fact Ammian mentions, that Julian's troops, breaking from their mine into the town of Maogamalka, surprised the garrison "as they were chanting, according to their custom, the *justice* and felicity of this very king." Another in jacinth has an elephant's head inscribed "Masdaki Rai," "Prince Masdak"—not the famous communist of the name who made a convert of King Cavades to his ruin. But these two examples are quoted here merely on account of their subjects, else they are foreign to our present purpose, the consideration of the stamps alone. The precious stones evidently designed for princely seals necessarily served their purpose as gems set in rings, a part of our subject to be hereafter separately considered.

The antelope,† or more properly the wild-sheep of Armenia, appears

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\* In Hindoo mythology the ear of Chandra, the moon, is drawn by an antelope with long spiral horns; hence that animal was the emblem of the moon, as the lion of the sun, and here do we find the true origin of Diana's stag in Grecian fable. Vishnu in one of his avatars takes the name of *Varaha*, his Sacti or energy is *Parahi*, and her *Vehan*, vehicle or attribute, is the buffalo. Here is at once the origin of that favourite royal name, *Vaharun*, borne by four of the line, and the universal adoption of the Hindoo sacred buffalo as a device.

† I cannot ascertain the exact species. It has reflexed horns exactly like the chamois, but much longer in proportion to its size. The animal is often figured *couchant*, with the royal diadem tied round its neck, the sun and moon in the field distinctly marking it for the attribute (and symbol) of some grand divinity. One would almost suspect that our Richard II. took the idea of his favourite badge, the white hart chained, couchant, from the sight of a gem of the kind. Another Sassanian beast, *armorial*, has such monstrous and peculiar horns, that it can hardly be other than the

so commonly as a signet device, that the figure must certainly embody some notion of great supposed importance. Could it have been chosen for the emblem of Persia Proper, its favourite habitat; as in contemporary art Carthage is known by the horse's head, Africa by the scorpion, Spain by the rabbit, Gallia by the prancing steed? In Daniel's Vision, the *ram* typifying Darius has horns that were high, and one of them larger than the other. Now in all ancient figures of the common ram, the horns, however big, always curve downwards around the ear, and the epithet "high" is the very last one applicable to them. Probably, therefore, this mountain sheep was the animal the prophet had in view, and the Hebrew word will be capable of such interpretation. Ammian speaks of Sapor II. as "lifting up his horns," which may not be merely a rhetorical trope; for the Sassanian kings actually appear graced with such strange appendages upon their medals. But the deep significance of the emblem is again manifested from its being emblazoned on these signets borne up by two pair of wings, like certain royal busts, intimating the divine nature of the object thus supported. On another stamp this beast couchant, engraved with unusual spirit, has the royal diadem tied round his neck, with the inscription "Bat Parzai," in which the name of Persia (Phars) is evidently contained. Can this have any reference to the astrological doctrine that Persia was under the influence of the sign Aries, as Manilius lays down:—

"Him Persia worships, clad in robes that flow,  
Her steps entangling as they fall below."

Ammian (xix. i.) describes how Sapor II. advanced under the very walls of Amida—"Mounted on his steed, towering above all his attendants, he moved in front of his whole army, wearing, instead of a diadem, the golden figure of a ram's head set with precious stones." Such a royal helmet there is reason to believe we behold upon the seal just described. The tilting-helmets that came into fashion about

*Mouflon* of Sardinia, a native of Tartary also; or the Jaal of Mount Sinai, the Akko of Deuteronomy. The beast with the long heavy reflexed horns may be the great Paseng of Persia, which yields the bezoar.



1450, bore a strong resemblance to this object, and like it were commonly made in the shape of the head and neck of some beast, and rose to a monstrous height above the knight's shoulders, which supported all the burthen of the head-piece; and such an elevation appears intended by the term "*celsior ipse*," applied to the Persian conqueror in Ammian's account. The Persian cavalry at this period, the middle of the fourth century, must have greatly resembled the men-at-arms of a thousand years later; for he goes on: "All the squadrons were clothed in steel, being so covered with close-fitting plates over every limb, that the rigid joinings of the armour corresponded to the joints of their bodies, and vizors formed like the human face were so artfully fitted to their heads, that whilst their bodies were plated over to one impenetrable surface,\* the falling missiles can only take effect where through minute openings placed in front of the eyeballs a scanty light is admitted, or where narrow breathing-holes are perforated through the extremities of the nostrils" (xxv. 1).

Again, his contemporary, Heliodorus (ix. 15), describes the Persian helmet as solid, all hammered out of one piece of metal, and exactly imitating the man's face like a mask (it must be remembered that the ancient mask represented the entire head, hair and all). "The wearer is entirely covered with this from the crown of his head down to the neck, with the exception of the eye-holes to peep through. The whole of his body, not the breast merely, is covered in this way—they beat out plates of iron and bronze into a square form a hand's breadth in measure, and fitting one upon the other by the edges of the sides, so that the one above overlaps the one below, and its side lies over the piece adjacent in a continuous order; then linking together the whole fabric by fastenings underneath the overlapping parts, they construct a scaled tunic fitting to the body without annoyance, and adhering closely to every portion thereof, contracting and

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\* The cavalier in the sculpture at the Takt-i-Bostan (admirably engraved in 'Porter's Travels') wears a very long *mail* shirt, the hood of which is drawn over a skull cap, and hangs like a short veil (our "ugly") over his face, similar to the mode of the present Circassians.

extending itself to suit without impeding every movement. It has sleeves, also, and reaches from the neck down to the knee, opening merely between the thighs sufficiently for convenience in getting on horseback." An exact description, this, of the *teglated* armour of the Normans.\*

The king's bust, surrounded by a Pehlevi legend giving his name and lofty titles, frequently dignifies the calcedony stamps from the earliest to the latest ages of the monarchy; but the royal image, when executed by the best hands of the times, appears on a rarer material and in a different fashion, on the nicolo and the sardonyx, cut in the ancient form of the perforated scarabeoid, to be worn as a bracelet; or again, on precious stones, the spinel, almandine, guarnaccino, amethyst, fashioned as gems for setting in rings.† That the ornament for the finger had been naturalised amongst the *later* Persians is apparent from a remark in Procopius (Bell. Pers. 18), that no Persian was allowed to wear a *ring*, brooch, or girdle made of gold, except by the express permission of the king, conferred as a mark of special distinction. This explains the rarity of Sassanian ring stones, and their precious materials when they do occur—being designed as badges of superior merit.‡

It will be found on examination of this series, that the best executed portraits are those on precious stones, quite the converse of the rule holding good for Greek and Roman art, in which the

\* This invention must have been of old date, for when Masristius, Mardonius's master of the horse, was thrown from his horse in the skirmish preceding the battle of Plateæ, he was unable to rise from the weight of his armour; not merely his body, but his arms and legs being covered with plates of gold, bronze, and steel. The Athenians could only despatch him by thrusting the long spike at the butt end of a spear into the *sight* of his helmet.—*Plutarch*, 'Aristides.'

† Often greatly exceeding the customary Roman dimensions. The British Museum sard of the "Fire-priest" is  $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$  inch, a perfect oval; the Devonshire amethyst of Varanes IV., of nearly the same dimensions. The *cabochon* form, whatever the gem, was then the rule in Persia.

‡ The satrap Nacharagus boasts to the Byzantine general, Martinus, before his own defeat at Archinopolis, "I hold the victory as firmly, and put it on with as much ease as I do this ornament," pointing at the same time to the ring he was wearing.—*Agathias*, II.



sard was preferred to all other gems, so long as works of any value were produced.

The most interesting ring-stone I have met with, for it must of necessity date from the first monarchy, is a sard presenting the bust of a Persian prince, his head covered with close, short curls, his neck with an elaborate collar of beads, engraved in a very peculiar style. But what gives the portrait its importance, are a ram's head and two cuneiform letters in the field, precisely as seen on the coins of Salamis in Cyprus, thus indubitably marking the head for a Persian satrap's of that island, and consequently anterior to the Macedonian conquest. This gem has evidently been reduced to its present shape in modern times; there can be little doubt its original form was a perforated scarabeoid (my collection). Such, indeed, is the shape of a large fine-coloured sardonyx of three layers (Pulsky Collection), which exhibits the full-length figure of a Parthian or Sassanian king, tiara on head, and attired in all his gorgeous apparel. Its type recalls the very important notice of a similar intaglio in a letter of Pliny's, when governor of Bithynia, addressed to the emperor Trajan. "Apuleius, an officer stationed at Nicomedia, has written to me that a person named Callinicus having been forcibly detained by the bakers Maximus and Dionysius, to whom he had hired himself, fled for sanctuary to your statue, and being brought before the magistrate, made the following declaration: 'that he had been formerly slave to Labienus Maximus, and taken prisoner by Susagus in Mæsia, thence sent as a present by Decebalus to Pacorus, king of Parthia, in whose servitude he had remained many years; but at last had made his escape and got to Nicomedia.' He was brought before me, and persisting in the same story, I judged that he ought to be sent on to you for examination. This I have been somewhat delayed in doing, in consequence of having instituted a search for a *gem* engraved with the portrait of Pacorus and the ensigns of royalty he is used to wear, which gem the man tells me had been stolen from him. For I was anxious to send it to you if it could possibly be recovered, together with the man himself, as I have actually done with this piece of ore, which

he asserts he brought away with him, from a Parthian mine. It is sealed up with my own signet, the impression on which is a four horse car."

It must be observed here, that Pliny terms the portrait of Pacorus *gemma*, not *annulus*, a sufficient evidence that it was nothing but a stone unset, either a scarabeoid or a stamp. The fact of a slave's possessing such a seal throws light upon the existence of so many others bearing the king's bust engraved so rudely and in such common materials, that they could only have belonged to the lower officials or perhaps the menials of the royal household. Again, the equally numerous class representing priests (*mobeds*) and fire-altars, may safely be assigned to the Magi, that powerful and numerous caste, whose establishment only fell with the monarchy itself.

One point more in this letter must be noticed—the "piece of ore," thought of sufficient importance to be forwarded for Trajan's own inspection. It was probably a specimen from a silver mine, a metal very abundant amongst the Persians. Immense quantities are still yielded by Thibet, then a tributary country. Both the Parthian and Sassanian currency consisted entirely of silver and copper, gold pieces of either race being almost unknown, and therefore rather to be considered *pièces de luxe* than current coin.\* Procopius, with the laughable vanity of a true Byzantine, pretends that the Persian king did not dare to coin gold, that being the exclusive prerogative of the Roman emperor—a somewhat unsatisfactory solution of the difficulty when we consider the supreme contempt Nushirwan the Just justly entertained and expressed for Justinian, his superstition, and his power. Yet the historian afterwards hints at the true reason, adding that "even were the Persians to coin gold, none of the nations with whom they trade would take it in payment," the Byzantine solidi being then the universal currency of the world, circulating at once amongst the Anglo-Saxons and the nations of Upper India. But in all

\* This is indicated by the exceptional weight of the only two known; one of Hormisdas III., the other of Chosroes I. They seem to be intended for ornaments alone, like the contemporary medallions of the Eastern emperors.



times the Orientals have preferred silver for their circulating medium, all the immensity of gold coin that finds its way into India at the present moment being melted down, either for conversion into personal ornaments, or into ingots for the purpose of hoarding.

The portraits under consideration are some royal; of the king himself, his numerous queens, the yet more numerous princes of the blood; and of others, apparently tributary chiefs and high officials. In the finer stones they are often fairly executed, especially taking into account the lateness of their date, when the glyptic art in the Roman empire was fast expiring, or already extinct. Still in most cases do they betray that heavy, coarse touch of the artist, quite characterizing this class of intagli. Although gems of the Sassanian line abound, yet any that can be positively attributed to their immediate predecessors, the *Arsacidæ*, are extremely rare—a strange deficiency, considering the length of their rule, the abundance of their existing coins, and their boasted patronage of Greek artists. The only mode that suggests itself to me for explaining this apparent blank in Oriental glyptics is derived from the analogy of the numismatics of the same dynasty. As their coins never present the figure of any peculiar national deity, but in the beginning continue the Apollo and the Hercules of the Seleucidæ, and carry on with a Victory or a Peace to the very end, so it may reasonably be suspected that the gems rudely engraved with Grecian types, so abundantly brought hither from Asia, represent the signets of the Partian epoch. In antiquity the fashion of the coinage and of the signet was ever one and the same; for coin was in its nature nothing more than metal impressed with the sovereign's seal to warrant its currency.

By far the most important work that can with certainty be referred to this period is the fine onyx of two strata,  $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$  in. in size, engraved with a bust, not diademed, but of unmistakably Arsacid physiognomy. On the sloping edge of the stone is engraved in large letters his name and dignity: ΟΥΣΑΣ ΠΙΤΤΑΞΗΣ ΙΒΗΡΩΝ ΚΑΡΧΗΔΩΝ, "Ousas, vitiaxa of the Iberian Carchedi (the modern Georgia)." *Vitiaxa* was the title given to the eighteen sub-kings,

or great satraps, of the Parthian monarchy, in virtue of which the Sassanid sovereign took the style of "King of kings." Ousas follows, it will be noticed, the example of his superior in using the Greek language for his superscription. This interesting monument is in the French cabinet; but Professor Maskelyne possesses a small amethyst very neatly engraved with the same head, having in the field two words in (apparently) *Hebrew* characters, not yet deciphered.

Of the Achæmenidæ, indeed, we cannot expect to find portraits on gems, which even the inventive Greeks had hardly attempted before Alexander's time. The royal signet remained, down to the last Darius, a cylinder, and depicted the King of kings in his full glory of attire mounted upon the state chariot.

A few, however, of the Sassanian portraits are so well drawn and carefully finished, that, despite their inscriptions authenticating their date, we feel at first some difficulty in regarding them as productions of those lower ages which the monarchy embraced, especially when we contrast their style and work with the utter barbarism then reigning at Rome and Byzantium. Yet certain it is that with the re-establishment of the ancient religion and sovereignty by Artashir\* the Blacksmith, in A.D. 226, the arts appear to have simultaneously revived in their dominions; the coins issued by that patriot-prince and his immediate successors being immeasurably superior as regards both design and minting to those of the later Parthians; whilst their jewellers were unrivalled in the rest of the world—the famous Cup of Chosroes exciting the admiration of Cellini himself, when shown to him by François I. as one of the chief ornaments of his treasury. Thus, by a strange coincidence, Assyria may with exactest truth

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\* In the Pulsky cabinet is a cameo of a Sassanian king sacrificing a bull, in the character of Mithras, attributed to this king, which for delicacy of execution may compete with the best works of the Augustan epoch. And for intaglio engraving, hardly anything can be imagined more full of life and expressive of the historic character of the man, with the most perfect technical finish, than the bust in front-face of Varahran IV., on a large cornelian. He wears a very elaborate turban, with a profusion of jewellery, and the legend round is in the most beautifully cut *Pali*.—(Pearse Collection.)



be styled both the cradle and the grave of the art of gem-engraving—being its birthplace and its last asylum.

Their ring-stones are for the most part gems having a highly convex surface, apparently the reason for the so frequent choice of the carbuncle. Even where nicoli or sards are used they are cut *en cabochon*, or else to a very obtuse cone flattened to a field to receive the engraving—a shape restricted by the Romans to the sardonyx alone.

In now particularising the most interesting examples of the class that have come under my own notice, and many of the legends on which I have been successful in deciphering, my reader's attention will be directed *en passant* to several curious points of history illustrated by them. The list must be headed by the magnificent amethyst, reckoned amongst the chiefest ornaments of the Devonshire cabinet, bearing the bust of Varahran Kermanshah, seen in profile wearing the tiara, the work of extraordinary boldness and uncommon finish for any class, and surrounded by a long legend in two lines of large, well-cut Pehlevi characters. This stone ( $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1$  inch, oval) forms the centre in the comb belonging to the *parure* of antique gems, so tastefully combined and set by Messrs. Hancock, the duke's jewellers.\* A nicolo (formerly Fould's) with the bust of a queen, whose breasts are ostentatiously displayed† (as in all these female busts), her hair falling in two immense plaited tresses; is an intaglio executed with extraordinary minuteness. Around runs a long legend in microscopic

\* Fully equal to this in beauty of work and forcible expression is the same portrait, but seen in front (which strongly recalls Holbein's Henry VIII.), above described. The same collection (Major Pearce's) also boasts another, only inferior to this in merit, the full-faced bust of a youthful shah, whose features resemble Cavades on his coins. His crown is of unique pattern, a row of tall fleur-de-lys springing out of the diadem, the point of each tipped with a monster pearl. Material, too, is uncommon, a cabochon rock-crystal  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch in diameter. The employment of the Pali, instead of the usual Pehlevi, in the legends, may be explained by supposing them made as official signets for the satrap of the Indian provinces of the shah's empire. To suppose, as some have done, that they represent Scythian princes, is preposterous; so immeasurably superior is their art to that displayed in the latter class.

† Probably to indicate her having attained to the honours of maternity, ever held in the highest esteem in Persia.

letters commencing with *Madodochti*, "Queen Mado" (answering to the Greek *Enanthe*, so common a name for the votaresses of Bacchus). A beautiful spinel of my own has a bust, the head covered with huge curls standing up like a cap, and the name *Zumithri*—perhaps another example of a Hindoo god's (Sumitri is an avatar of Vishnu) giving his name to a mortal prince—or this may, indeed, represent some tributary rajah in the shah's dominions upon the Indus. Another spinel (Pulsky\*) presents a head which for beauty of work is the first in the class, and, indeed, competes with the best efforts of the Roman school when most flourishing. The face resembles that of Narses on his medals. The legend, unfortunately imperfect, begins with the title *Nowazi*,† "the Merciful," well adapted to the recorded character of this excellent prince. In the late Mertens collection, No. 52, a two-coloured sard presented a clever bust of a young prince, inscribed "*Piruzi zi Shapuhri*," "Perozes, son of Sapor." But I possess a still more interesting portrait, though the workmanship is inferior to the last named—a large carbuncle, on which Sapor II.'s bust, borne up upon two pair of wings, to symbolize his divine origin, is placed between the sun and moon—recalling the arrogant style assumed by this very prince in his epistle to the Emperor Constantius, which Ammian has preserved (xvii. 5):—"Rex regum Sapor, particeps siderum, frater solis et lunæ, Constantio Cæsari fratri meo salutem plurimam dico." The legend, very neatly cut, reads distinctly, "*Piruz Shahpuhri*"—a remarkable confirmation of a circumstance also noted by Ammian in his most graphic account of the siege of Amida, conducted by Sapor in person—that the Persian host investing that city chanted throughout the night the praises of Sapor, accompanied with the titles of *Pyroses* and *Saansaan*; that is to say, "Victor and King of kings." It is no wonder that both gems and medals of the second Sapor should so abound, for the duration of his reign and of his life were commensurate, extending to seventy-two years. In fact, his

\* Lately bought for the British Museum.

† So read by E. Thomas, but it seems to me to be *Narschi Shah*, and to agree with the spelling of the same name on De Sacy's *Nakshi-Rustam* Tablet, No. 2.



sovereignty began before his birth, for his father, Hormisdas II., dying and leaving his queen pregnant of a male child (as the Magi predicted), the diadem was placed upon her womb, to crown the unborn prince, before the grand assembly of the satraps and nobles.

A nicolo in my collection presents a laureated head much resembling Caracalla or his reputed son Elagabalus. It is within a sunken circle, and a Pehlevi legend, unintelligible to me, surrounds it. It is not likely to be intended for a Roman, but may be explained as an attempt at novelty in the representing the Great King after the usual imperial type. A head of some king on a nicolo scarabeoid (Praun Collection) has in the field that singular object already mentioned as a favourite device for a signet amongst the Persian commonalty, and explained by Mordtmann as the royal standard. It seems, however, to me rather to represent the awful tripod, or altar of incense, mentioned by Procopius (Bell. Per. i. 23), in explaining the phrase "To be sent to the tripod," i. e., to be in disgrace at court. "When any Persian learns that the king is displeased with him, he does not take sanctuary in any temple or such like place, but sits down by the *great iron tripod* which always stands in front of the royal palace, and there awaits the king's sentence upon him." Another illustrative type I have seen, giving this dreaded object with the royal diadem suspended over it, and the legend *Rastachi*, "the Just"—a title of all others the best fitted to its significance.\*

Like the Shah in our days, the Sassanian king prefaced his missives with a long string of titles expressing the qualities he was pleased to arrogate to himself. The curious letter addressed by Chosroes II., more famous as Khosru Parviz, to the rebel general Bahram, copied

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\* I lately discovered in the Blacas cabinet a head of Perozes (lapis-lazuli) in the character of Serapis, a butterfly pitched upon the modias, a lizard (symbol of the Logos) behind his head. This is an unprecedented example of a Zoroastrian monarch assuming the figure of a Roman deity, imitating a very common fashion with his rivals of the Lower Empire. Another (Pearse gems) surprised me much as a unique attempt to naturalize that popular Roman device, a head covered with a *chimera*-helmet, made up in this case of a wolf's head and a comic mask. The stone, a three-layered onyx, bore a Pehlevi legend upon its white zone.

by Theophylact Simocatta, is an excellent specimen, and opens thus :—  
 “Chosroes, king of kings, master of rulers, lord of nations, governing in peace, a saviour of mortals, amongst the gods a man good and everlasting, but amongst men a most glorious god, above measure illustrious, victorious, rising together with the sun and giving eyes to the night, renowned for his ancestry, a monarch that hateth war, munificent, he that hath the Asons (genii) in his pay, the preserver of the kingdom of the Persians,” &c. This grandiloquent list certainly furnishes a complete glossary for all the titles filling up the long legends surrounding the portraits already described. At other times, with affected humility, the sole legend around the head is *Apestan ul Jездani*, “The most humble servant of the gods.” Perhaps, indeed, in such cases the portrait is merely that of a private man; for the same Bahram, in his reply to the letter above cited (Theoph. iv. 7), calls himself, among other equally modest epithets, “The lover of the gods,” a sense identical with the last-quoted and common superscription.\*

In one point of the costume there is a diversity difficult to explain between the gems and the medals. On the latter the regal head is invariably bedecked with the tiara, a balloon-shaped turban rising out of a mural crown, from which float proudly the two streaming ends of the broad and fringed diadem. On the gems the heads are for the most part bare, the hair being simply confined by a fillet in the old Greek fashion. In the most important gems, however, like the Devonshire amethyst, the tiara appears, but in a plain form, bordered with pearls, in fact differing little from the ancient *cidaris*, the national Persian head-gear, which distinguished royalty by having its apex erect, the subjects bending theirs forward like the so-called

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\* With Chosroes I the legends on the coins always commence with APSD, read by Thomas, *afzud*, “long live;” hence its appearance on a gem shows the head to be that of a successor of that monarch. On the grand Devonshire amethyst, Prince Vahrahman (not yet *Shah*) uses the regular style of the coins: “Vahrahman Kerman malka, bari masdsini bagi Shahapohri malkan malka Iran va Aniran, minochetri men Jездan. “Vahrahman, of Kerman king, son of the servant-of-Ormuzd, the divine Sapor, king of the kings of Iran and Aniran, heaven-born, from God.”



Phrygian cap. The omission of the actual Sassanian head-dress from the gem-portraits adds much to the difficulty in identifying them, for the medals show that a certain variation in its fashion was made by every king upon his accession to the throne, and adhered to without alteration throughout his reign; and this proves a valuable guide in identifying the likenesses when the minute, blundered, or effaced legends fail to give any definite sense. It is strange indeed why the engravers should have left the heads on the gems so often destitute of this important badge of sovereignty—especially as they seem to have had so much difficulty in representing the curly and flowing locks, that cherished distinction of the Achæmenian race in every age, and which they usually attempt to render by a succession of drill-holes set close together.\*

Invariably in these portraits will the eye be caught by the huge pearl pendant from the right ear; and which the artist, to judge from the care bestowed upon its representation, has evidently considered one of the most essential points in the royal paraphernalia. His solicitude brings to one's recollection the romantic tale so fully given by the Walter Scott of ancient history, Procopius (Bell. Pers. i. 4), concerning that pearl of unprecedented magnitude obtained at the urgent entreaty of King Perozes, by the daring diver, from the guardianship of the enamoured shark, but with the sacrifice of his own life; and which the same monarch in the very moment of destruction consoled himself by burying for ever from the eager researches of his treacherous foes, the Ephthalite Huns, in the monster pitfall into which they had lured him and his nobles. The ropes

\* An invaluable picture of the shah in full dress is preserved to us by a large nicolo ( $1\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{3}{4}$  inch) brought by General Cunningham from the Punjab, and now in the British Museum. The monarch stands upon a prostrate foe (a Roman by his armour and crested helmet), in whose body he has planted the spear on which he composedly leans, looking round, with his drawn sword, point downwards, held in front of him. He wears a battlemented crown, surmounted by a balloon like that of Sapor I. in the rock-sculptures, and is probably the same personage. His costume is a tight vest and ample trousers, from his neck floats out the royal diadem, whilst at his waist are displayed the long broad ends of the *kosti*, the Parsee girdle, the symbol of the Zoroastrian faith. The style is bold in the extreme, deeply sunk, but very heavy.

of enormous pearls that load the shah's bust in many of these gem portraits curiously verify Plutarch's statement that Artaxerxes Mnemon used to go into battle covered with jewellery to the value of over two millions of our money (twelve thousand talents). And in another place, he notices that the scabbard only of Mithridates' sword (a descendant from Darius Hystaspis) was worth four hundred talents (eighty thousand pounds) from which particular the aggregate of his other decorations may be deduced, and remove all suspicion of fable from the first-quoted tradition.

After examining a large number of these seals, the conclusion has forced itself upon me that the portion of the legend containing the *king's name* has in many instances been purposely effaced. This appearance is too frequent to be ascribed to mere accident, for to defacement by such a cause the rest of the lettering (which remains uninjured) was equally exposed. It may be conjectured that on the king's death, all his officers' seals, with his head and name, were defaced and thrown away, exactly as the Great Seal is cut in two on the death of our sovereigns, or the *Annulus Piscatoris* broken up on the Pope's demise.

The character used in these inscriptions is invariably the Pehlevi, the Zoroastrian alphabet, which only appears after the restoration of the ancient line and the national sovereignty, the Parthian kings having exclusively employed the Greek language on their coinage, possibly from the wish to pass themselves off as the legitimate representatives of the Macedonian line.\* Their constant title on their medals is *Phil-hellene*, though they oddly manifested their love for the Greeks by stripping Alexander's successors of the greater part of his Asiatic conquests.

There are, however, indications not wanting that the Pehlevi was the alphabet of the *natives* when under the Parthian domination, and was properly the national one—the offspring and successor of the

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\* With the same view they continued to date by the Seleucidan era, and even in some cases by the Macedonian names of the months.



Achæmenian cuneiform. "Its earliest characters are met with on certain coins (few in number) of the last Arsacidæ, wherever the Greek language is not used, and had currency in but two localities, the region round about Persepolis, where it forms the original text, and occupies the post of honour in the explanatory inscriptions cut upon the numerous rock-sculptures there; and secondly at Shahirzor, in the bilingual inscriptions upon the fire-temples of that vicinity. Thus it appears to have been current under the Parthian empire, throughout the provinces of Kurdistan, Khusistan, and Fars (Persia Proper), and to have had a Mesopotamian or Babylonian source, and in this way to have a common origin with the Chaldee (modern Hebrew), from which it only differs in a few forms" (Thomas: 'Numismatic Chronicle,' xii. 93). Its derivation from the cuneiform first became apparent to me by comparing certain of the letters with the Cypriote Persian, that latest modification of the cuneiform, in which the characters standing for A and S at once assume their subsequent *Persepolitan* form by a slight change of position, occasioned by the alteration of the primitive *vertical* arrangement of the letters in each word to the present horizontal lineation.

This alphabet has been termed *Parthian*, but can claim no special Parthian attribution any more than the Bactrian Pali upon their contemporaneous Indian currencies, or the Greek upon their Asiatic. It is also termed *Persepolitan*, but ought with greater justice to be denominated *Chaldee*,\* the designation bestowed upon the radically identical character, the square Hebrew. The only Sassanian king using this character on his coins is Artashir I., of whom a very clearly struck piece is figured in the above-quoted periodical (xv. 180).

Of *gems* inscribed in this early lettering, no examples are known to me; as indeed was to be expected, for this alphabet was speedily given up by the first king of the Sassanian line, and it has already

\* The Chaldee language, not Persian, is invariably used for the king's style on the coinage, doubtless as being the sacred tongue. This fact is a strong proof that the character also is the national Chaldee which had taken the place of the cuneiform. The Jews, according to their own account, adopted the Chaldee mode of writing during the Captivity, so its native origin is placed beyond all question.

been stated that our seals did not come into general use until after his establishment on the Persian throne. I have, however, seen an amethyst bearing a regal head quite of the Arsacid physiognomy,\* with a regular Chaldee legend in the field, translated, "as a bear, mighty;" but whether this may not be an insertion of later times, to make the thing a talisman, remains an open question. The gem was at the time in the possession of a Jew dealer, who, on the strength of the legend, read as pure Hebrew, believing it to be an authentic portrait of one of the Biblical kings of his own "people," valued it at a most extravagant price. This, with a rudely engraved small sard of Hertz's, are the sole examples which have come in my way of intagli that can, with any foundation, be attributed to the times of the Parthian empire—a most singular and inexplicable anomaly, *unless* my previously advanced theory be accepted.

The *second* form of this alphabet is found holding the inferior place in the inscriptions at Nakshi-Rustam, and is the one exclusively adopted on the coins of Sapor I. and of his successors for above two centuries. This is by far the most common character met with on the gems, for its use coincides with the flourishing ages of the Sassanian monarchy. It is seen in its full beauty in the long legend on the Devonshire amethyst, setting forth the name and titles of Varahran Kermanshah, as well as on a remarkably large sard *en cabochon*, with apparently the same portrait which formerly came under my notice in the hands of a London dealer (afterwards stolen and lost).†

This alphabet, whose forms, when carefully engraved, are elegant though simple, consists of three long vowels, A, I, U, and eleven consonants, B, D, H guttural, K, L or R indifferently, M, N, P or PH, S or SH, T, Z. The short vowels were to be supplied by the reader according to the usual rule in Oriental tongues. Letters whose form permits are commonly united in a *nexus* of two, even in the earliest inscriptions. But in the later inscriptions, three or more are run

\* It strongly resembles that of Ousas, prince of Iberia, figured by Visconti (II. Pl. xvi 10), from the French cabinet, which I have already noticed (p. 70).

† The original, perhaps, of No. 673, 'Raspe's Catalogue.'



together, and the confusion grows until it ends in the continuous, most undecipherable Cufic.\*

Both coins and medals attest that this was the sole recognized national alphabet. But that another, and more perfected one, was current simultaneously with it for literary purposes even in the fourth century, we may gather incidentally from Epiphanius ('Hæres.' lxi.), where he mentions that Manes divided his treatise 'On the Faith' into twenty-two books, after the number of the letters in the Syriac alphabet. "For most Persians use, as well as the Persian letters, the *Syriac* characters; just as many nations amongst ourselves use the Greek, although each one may have a national alphabet of its own. Others, forsooth, pride themselves upon writing that most recondite dialect of the Syriac, the one current in Palmyra, both the dialect itself and the letters, and these are twenty-two in number." This notice makes it more than a matter of conjecture that the Semitic, already alluded to as seen on certain Persian seals, was the Palmyrene, which numerous existing inscriptions show was only a modification of the Phœnician. As the foundation of Palmyra goes back to the mythic age of Solomon, her alphabet might well occur on monuments of the remotest antiquity, for it would be coeval with the Babylonian cuneiform.

This second alphabet is the parent of the *Zend*, in which the Parsees still preserve their hereditary *Zendavesta*, that treasury of the Zoroastrian religion collected into one volume by the care of the first Sassanian king. The characters are virtually the same, but modified in writing into the more commodious fluency of a cursive hand.

The *third* and latest form of the Pehlevi is the parent of the old Syriac, and of its modification, the Cufic. Inasmuch as the latter received its name from its being adopted by the first transcribers of the Koran at Cufa in Mesopotamia—it is the natural inference that it was the established cursive writing of the age, and therefore

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\* The small number of these characters is a conclusive testimony to the high antiquity of their invention.

embraced by the Arab conquerors, who up to that time had possessed no literature, perhaps no alphabet of their own. The MS. of the Koran still venerated in Persia as the actual handwriting of Ali, the second successor to the Prophet, and his son-in-law, is written in the precise character seen on the latest Sassanian seals, more distinct in fact, and better defined than the Cufic afterwards became. Ouseley gives a fac-simile of some lines of this venerable text (Plate 82). So trifling is the difference between the alphabets used on the coinage of the last Sassanian kings and on that of the first caliphs, who continued the old types for many years after the conquest (not striking money in their own name until 72 of the Hejira), that Longperier reads the names of Sarparaz, Paran, and Zerni in the very same legends, which E. Thomas explains as giving the names of Omar, Farkhan, and Hani, in the common Cufic letter.

This *third* alphabet is no other than a corruption of the second, produced by running the letters into each other, a practice the Orientals are so given to for the sake of expedition in writing with a pen, although in engraving on a hard substance nothing is gained by it save confusion. This style first makes its appearance on the coins of Chosroes I., Justinian's great rival, and degenerates more and more under his successors, until it merges into the Cufic. Gems with legends in this lettering are common enough, but there is a sad falling off in their execution, marking the fast-spreading decadence of the times. The legends around the regal portraits commence with the four letters, variously read as *apād* or *afzūd*, "The Most High," or "Long live," a style first introduced upon the monetary legends of Chosroes I.

From the discoveries made of late years in the *topes* or Buddhist relic-shrines in Cabul, it has been ascertained, that concurrently with the usual Sassanian currency, another was issued either within, or for the use of, the Indian provinces of the empire, having its legends in the *Bactrian* letter;\* but of this no traces have, to my knowledge,

\* Supposed by E. Thomas to be only the Punic character modified for the expression of the sounds of the Indian language (the Pracrit), but certainly a very ancient



ever yet been observed upon any of the contemporary seals. But the true Pali, still the sacred letter of the Buddhists, and genuine parent of the modern Sanscrit, is to be seen on numberless calcedony stamps with ordinary Sassanian types, discovered in the Punjab. In this letter are the legends on the two magnificent royal seals (Pearse) already described. It is only reasonable to suppose that the Satrap of Bactriana, the fourth division of the Persian empire, should have his official seal engraved with a legend in the characters and language of the country. And this curiously illustrates the Byzantine Menander's statement, that Maniach, prince of Sogdiana, coming as ambassador from the Turks to Justin II., carried credentials written in the Scythian language and characters. For Sogdiana comprised Usbek Tartary and Little Thibet, where the same alphabet still keeps its ground.

The series comprehends those rude intagli (of extreme rarity) having some one of the common devices, the Minotaur, &c., cut on the field, and a true Himyaritic legend running round the bevelled edge in one continuous line. Examples are a large calcedony in the British Museum, device, the lion-headed man, or Mithraic priest; and a male and female figure joining hands, in the field two stars, on a nicolo in my own collection. South Arabia must claim their parentage.

To conclude with a few general remarks upon the Pehlevi alphabet and its variations. It was the eminent Orientalist De Sacy, who in his '*Antiquités de la Perse*,' was the first to decipher this hitherto inexplicable character, from the careful study of the Kermanshah tablets commemorating Sapor I. and Varanes, which are written in what has been above described as the *second* form. The trilingual inscriptions at Nakshi-Rustam give the Persepolitan (the so-called *Parthian*) character for the two versions in the native language; but the third, the Greek, by supplying the actual meaning, enabled the acute Frenchman to fix the exact value of the several letters. The lettering used in the legends of the coins, owing to its microscopic

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alphabet, for the Greeks found it current in Bactriana when they conquered the province, and therefore used it in their bilingual coin legends.

size (rendered obligatory upon the engraver of the dies by the necessity of crowding into so confined a circle the pompous style of the sovereign), is very similar in appearance to the modern Pehlevi of the Parsee religious books; and, like that, the most difficult conceivable to make out, so many different letters assuming the same form, from the die-sinker's inability to express the small distinctive curves and other diacriticals. It was this class, however, that De Sacy set himself professedly to illustrate, in which he has been followed with little success by Longperier; but the sagacious discoverer has recently found a worthy successor in E. Thomas, in his little treatise 'On Sassanian Mint-monograms and Gems.' It is curious, that although De Sacy saw the identity of the alphabet on the seals with that of the Kermanshah tablets and the medals, yet he should have to confess his inability to make out more than a single example; which failure he attributes to the language used in such cases being not the Zend, of which he was master, but the Pehlevi. This one seal-legend he reads Artashetran-Rami-Minochetir—"Rami son of Artaxerxes, of divine race." Sapor's style (and that of most of his successors) on the coinage is "Masdisin bagi Shapuhri malkan malka airan va anairan"—"The servant of Ormuzd Sapor, king of kings of Iran and not-Iran,"\* where it must be remarked the Chaldee title "*malka*" is invariably assumed instead of the Persian "*shah*," though the other is the case with the gem legends. In fact, the latter, however legible, often spell out such strange words as to corroborate De Sacy's opinion that they are couched in a totally different language.

Longperier in his alphabet gives several distinct forms for the same letter, which makes his system hopeless confusion, as well as repugnant to the universal practice of mankind. To what purpose would an alphabet serve, in which many letters had half-a-dozen forms totally distinct, and what is even worse, the same form standing for three or four different letters? But the well-cut gem legends show that the Pehlevi alphabet admitted no more variation in its forms than

\* "Of Persia and what is not Persia," i. e., all the world besides.



the Latin. Apparent irregularities result from the engraver's want of skill, or time, to make the diacritical curves, and consequently rendering them by angular strokes, exactly as the Greek letters were treated by the barbarous makers of the Alexandrian Gnostic talismans. But in the finer works of the age, the precious stones on which a superior hand has displayed its skill, the lettering is in the clearest and best defined forms that the tool could produce; and such must be taken for the normal forms of the characters, not the ill-defined corruptions produced by the carelessness and hasty execution of ordinary workmen.

A few amongst our seals present legends in the Greek language, and such are on another account of the highest interest to the archaeologist; inasmuch as design, work, and legend, point them out for the signets of the Persian Christians, those Nestorians "to whom the jealous pride of Perozes afforded an asylum, when persecuted and expelled from Europe and Asia Minor by his orthodox rival, the Byzantine emperor." Their sectarian hatred rendered them in after times the most zealous supporters of Nushirwan and Khosru Parviz, in their repeated invasions of the Roman territory. In the French Collection the following specimens of the class are particularised by Chabouillet. No. 1330, The Sacrifice of Abraham; striped sardonyx.—1331, The Virgin seated, holding the infant Jesus; garnet with a Pehlevi legend.—1332, The Virgin and Saint Elizabeth joining hands; between the figures a star and crescent; a Pehlevi legend in connected letters; carnelian.—1333, The Fish placed in the middle of the Christian monogram; a carnelian annular seal. And lastly, the most valuable of all, because offering the combination of the ancient Oriental form with the Greek decoration in the same example, the bust of Christ in profile and beardless, the fish below, and the legend XPICTOT: on a truncated cone in white calcedony.

Chabouillet considers these monuments to be all anterior to the date of the great persecution by Sapor II., A.D. 340; but the connected writing of the legend in No. 1332 attests a much later age.

I have discussed so fully this portion of my subject, because it is one as yet almost untouched, and hitherto passed over as entirely

impracticable by writers on glyptics, although it preserves to us so valuable a series of portraits, authenticated by their legends, of those mighty rulers who make as prominent a figure in the later ages of Roman history, as do their Achæmenian progenitors in the pages of the early Greek. In fact, Khosru Parviz not merely *claimed* by hereditary right the whole extent of the ancient empire of Xerxes, but had actually recovered its original limits, was master of all Asia, Egypt, and the north of Africa, and long kept his best general, Sain, closely pressing the siege of Constantinople—

“Sed dea quæ nimis obstat Rhannusia votis  
Erubuit vertitque rotam.”

At this very time, upon the capture of Jerusalem by the king in person, Mahomet delivered his famous prophecy of their coming fall, in the chapter of the Koran entitled “The Greeks,” commencing thus: “The Greeks have been overcome by the Persians in the nearest part of the land, but within a space of nine years after their defeat they shall overcome the others in their turn” (xxx.). This was uttered in the year 615, and was speedily verified by the almost miraculous successes of the Emperor Heraclius. To close all, in 641 the Sassanian sovereignty was annihilated by Mahomet’s successor, Omar.

Again, in the point of view of art, many of these works are far from contemptible; some few, like those cited above, have great merit; and all derive additional importance from the fact that they are the only intagli capable of affording historical evidence, that were produced either in the West or the East subsequently to the times of Constantine.

An interesting exemplification of the stereotyped character of Oriental art is afforded by a magnificent turquoise (Laco Coll.) engraved with heads of a *modern* shah and his queen, the field inlaid with ornaments in gold. But for the fresh look of the material and its decorations, the royal portraits might serve for the best depicted of their predecessors who called Artashir founder of their line.

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\* Succeeded by Sarban. The city was invested by the Persians, who made Chalcedon their head-quarters for more than ten years.





## INDIAN ENGRAVED GEMS.

It is universally acknowledged that the inhabitants of the Indian Peninsula derived the use of coined money from the Greek subjugators of Bactria, and that the earliest Hindoo pieces exhibit evident traces of being imitations, their rudeness increasing as their date descends, of the Greco-Bactrian currency. And this is equally true of those engraved gems, few indeed in number, whose types indisputably declare an Indian origin; and which are occasionally discovered mixed with the other jewels and coins, in the deposit normally consecrating the Buddhist topes or relic-shrines recently investigated in Cabul, of which Wilson gives such curious details in his '*Ariana Antiqua*.'

It is certainly to be reckoned amongst the other unaccountable inconsistencies of the Hindoo race, that although the earliest perhaps of mankind to attain to mechanical perfection and facility in the *carving* of the hardest stones, the jade, agate, crystal, granite, &c., into ornamental vases and other figures; and likewise in the shaping and polishing of all gems, the diamond excepted, with which they supplied the ancient world to an extent of which no conception at all adequate to the reality can now be formed—yet that despite all those

inducements held out by their own practical ability, and their abundance of materials, they never should have attempted to imitate their Persian neighbours in embodying in precious stones the *intaglio* forms of those numerous and often graceful deities whose statues on a larger scale they daily reproduced in innumerable multitudes in clay, stone, and bronze. Assuredly it was not the practical difficulties of this art that deterred them, seeing that they executed with facility many operations which would baffle the skill of the most expert modern lapidary, such as boring fine holes, with the greatest precision, not merely through the sardonyx, but even through the sapphire and ruby. Now this is a part of the working in hard stones much more difficult, and necessitating greater accuracy of hand and attention, than any processes required for sinking an *intaglio*, at least in its simplest forms, or in cutting a figure in relief upon the surface of the same material. Their unparalleled dexterity in working one of the hardest substances known, the *jade*,\* is wonderfully exemplified by the large tortoise found in the bank of the Jumna near Allahabad (now in the British Museum, Mineralogical Department), and which for fidelity to nature and exquisite finish is worthy of the ancient Greeks. Small figures in "hard" stones of the Sacred Bull, *couchant*, perforated through their length for stringing as beads, are often found in company with the other relics in the tope deposits; and also miniature *Hindoo idols* in the same style and materials.† But the most extraordinary production of the kind that ever came under my notice, was a figure of Buddha squatting in his cave, surrounded by numerous attributes, all cut with marvellous

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\* Equally wonderful as a monument of skill and patient industry is the statuette of Buddha, about an inch high, carved out of one entire and perfect sapphire. This most precious idol, probably a trophy from the sack of Candy, but converted by its impious captor into a breast-pin, now adorns its family series in the Mineralogical Department, British Museum.

† Neronian extravagance was far outdone by the deviser of the reliquary found in a Punjabee tope, which came into the hands of that enterprising explorer, Major Pearse. It was one monstrous emerald, three inches long by two thick, with the ends rounded off, and of good colour. It was bored through half its axis to contain a gold case, the size of the little finger, to hold two minute finger-joints of a Buddhist saint, whose holiness may be estimated by the costliness of the shrine inclosing such tiny relics.



skill in an enormous sardonyx of red and white strata; the mere stone a most valuable specimen, for 'brightness of its colours and unusual magnitude, being six inches in height and width, and nearly the same in thickness: a true specimen of the long disputed Murrhine, and offering all the characters of "lac" and "purpura" noted by Pliny in his description of that substance.

Sakya, the fifth Buddha, who "reascended" B.C. 520, lays down in the Thibetian Scriptures that: "Priests are prohibited from wearing rings, or having signets of gold, silver, or precious stones, but they may have seals made of copper, brass, bell-metal, or horn, or ivory. A man belonging to the religious order *must have* on his seal or stamp a circle with two deer on opposite sides, and below, the name of the founder of the *Vihara* (convent). A layman may have a full-length figure or a head engraved upon his signet."\* These rules probably serve to elucidate the types of certain large classes of the Sassanian seals; for example, that common device of the two antelopes rampant and confronted; and, still better, those Pali-inscribed gems from the Punjab, bearing symbols yet venerated amongst the very nations to whom Sakya's rules are law, the Nepalese, Thibetians, Cingalese, Chinese, or the ancient Jainas south of the Indus—strict Buddhists down to the close of the Sassanian empire.

Although one powerful motive for the engraving of intagli was wanting amongst the ancient Indians, which is indicated by Pliny's remark, "*Non signat Oriens aut Ægyptus etiam nunc literis contenta solis;*" meaning the non-employment of a seal's impression, but merely of the writer's signature to attest documents—yet still we should have *expected* that the Indians, as soon as they had learnt the fashion from their neighbours, and to a great extent, suzerains, the Persians (a race noted, from the most ancient times, for their fondness for

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\* The close intimacy subsisting in after times between the Sassanian and Chinese empires increases the probability of a common origin of many symbols on their remains. Some of the figures on the stamps may therefore be elucidated by the rules of the Chow-li, "Book of rites," attributed to the eighth century before our era. The special figure there assigned to earth is the square, to fire the circle, to water the dragon, to the mountains a deer.

engraved stones), they would have commenced augmenting the importance of their common gems, though but viewed as ornaments, by engraving on them sacred figures, either in intaglio like the Assyrians, or in relief, the first step of the Egyptians in the novel art. For it is sufficiently apparent that with the latter nation the scarabeus was worn as a sacred emblem on the necklace, long before the notion was entertained of employing its engraved base for a signet; and the same observation holds good to a certain extent for their imitators, the Etruscans. But be this as it may, it is certain that no gems have yet come to light representing purely Hindoo types, and discovered in provinces of India lying without the sphere of the influence of Greco-Bactrian civilization. And how widely this sphere extended, one little fact will serve to attest, the discovery (quoted by Raspe) of an agate engraved with the head of Pan in the sands of the Ganges.\*

To come now to the rare attempts of the Hindoos in the glyptic art, a concise description of the chief examples known will furnish out, though but scantily, a department of my subject in which one would naturally have looked for profusion and barbaric magnificence. Wilson has figured in his 'Antiquities of Afghanistan' the small number of intagli known to him as discovered in the deposits already mentioned. Of these one is a portrait at once recognized as belonging to the Greek school; two are common Roman gems, as was to be expected in sites where so many *aurei* of the Lower Empire have been discovered; but the others may be attributed with certainty to the art of the country in which they have been exhumed. Of these the most interesting is a sard with the bust of a female holding a flower, prettily executed, a legend below in the Sanscrit letter of the seventh century, perhaps the owner's name: "Kusuma-Dasaya," *The Slave of the Flower*. Another, the portrait of a Raja with four large pearls in his ear, and wearing a necklace: the legend reads, "Ajita Varmma," *Varmma the Victorious*, in Sanscrit characters

\* But by far the largest number of the gems now found in the Punjab manifest the influence of Sassanian art, not only in style, but in shape and material, being usually calcedony stamps, and convex garnet ring-stones.



of the ninth century. The name is found to have been that of a king of Cashmere about that period. Another sard, turned up at Hidda, bears a regal head in the same style as the last, but without a legend. The same tope furnished two gold rings set with sards: one, a head in relief, appears that of Buddha; the other, a portrait-bust, intaglio. The last in this list, a large sard intaglio, gives two seated figures in Hindoo costume, playing musical instruments, supposed by Wilson to be Krishna and Radama, but more probably the sign Gemini, so depicted by the *Hindoo* astrologers. As far as a judgment can be formed from the plate, the execution of this group is extremely neat, though the design somewhat stiff.

Prinsep gives (Plate iii. 3) a *ruby*\* of a pointed oval shape ( $\frac{3}{8} \times \frac{3}{8}$  inch), bearing a well-cut intaglio of a female head, a long pendant in her ear, and a flower in her hand. He styles it Grecian work, but the introduction of the latter attribute betrays either a certain influence of Indian taste upon the Greek engraver, or more probably the exact converse. It was found in the ruins of Khoja-o-ban, near Bokhara.

Raspe's No. 717 is certainly the head of a Hindoo raja with ear-pendant, pearl-necklace, and a club on his shoulder: the legend in early Sanscrit, or perhaps Pali, engraved in a fine garnet. No. 713, a man armed with spiked mace and round buckler embraces a female wearing on her arm two great *chank* bangles, the regular decoration of a bride, both seated on a sofa: lapis-lazuli. Also No. 714, a similar couple, flanked by two guards standing. These groups are in all respects analogous to the bas-reliefs at Salsette, Buddhist works, and hence their date may be approximately arrived at. But his No. 715, a lion on emerald, is shown by its legend in the modern Sanscrit character to be altogether recent, or at least later than the thirteenth century.

Under the head of *Barbarian Camei* will be found a notice of other Indian works of the kind that have fallen in my way.

\* Probably only a fine almandine garnet, a material as frequent in this class as it is unusual in Greek or Roman works.

Although the Greek colonists of Bactria founded a powerful and extensive kingdom, that flourished above two centuries, possessing also great wealth, as may be deduced from the large extant currency of its princes; it is very singular they should have left behind them so few engraved gems, considering the universal frequency of such works in their native country during the same space of time. We should have expected to meet with *here*, at the very fountain-head of the gem-supply, a numerous class—the figures of Indian gods, but assimilated to the Greek taste, exactly as the same, Siva and Nannaia, appear on the reverses of the medals.\* That the artistic skill to produce gem-works worthy of the mother country was not wanting amongst the Indo-Macedonians, during at least the first century of their establishment, is fully apparent from the excellence of the portraits upon the coinage issued by the sovereigns of the dynasty bearing purely Greek names, as Euthydemus, Heliocles, Menander, and Pantaleon, which lose nothing when compared with those of the contemporary Seleucidæ.†

\* And still more conspicuous in certain bas-reliefs found in Peshawar (exhibited at the Arch. Inst., 1863), where these Indian deities are sculptured in the Greek style, and present a most graceful union of the form and manner.

† The foregoing conclusions have lately (May, 1868) been strongly confirmed by the inspection of about two hundred gems, all collected in the Punjab during a residence of many years. They present a most heterogeneous mixture, commencing with Ninevitic cylinders, and including many late Roman and one Gnostic. Sassanian stamps and ring-stones in that peculiar style, whether original or imitative, formed the majority. But of unmistakable Greco-Indian work I could only discover one example, a warrior spearing a prostrate enemy, in the field a bent bow and flowers.







## MODERN ORIENTAL ENGRAVING.

BEFORE quitting the subject of Oriental glyptic art, Mohammedan seals, mediæval and modern, demand a brief notice—and for two reasons:—as being the immediate successors to the class last treated of, and as things the use of which kept alive the processes of gem engraving throughout the East during those ages when they were entirely forgotten in Europe.

Here, once more, we have to return to Persia, the parent and the last refuge of the art. The transition of the Pehlevi into the Cufic has been already traced, and the seals exhibiting the latter mode of writing form a very interesting series. The earliest retain the shape of the hemispherical stamp, but the ring-stone in its common form speedily and entirely supersedes that peculiarly Mesopotamian fashion. Many are stones of fine quality—spinels, sards, sardonyx—importations ready shaped from India as of yore; but in the majority the local loadstone maintains its ancient predominance.

The legends are cut in the bold, *vertical*, connected Cufic, and often arranged so as to form certain definite figures, such as a horse, a bird, a balance, a vase, an equilateral cross, or the mystic Egyptian Tau. They contain the owner's name and patronymic, or, more rarely, some

brief sentence from the Koran. The characters, often very delicate, apparently cut with the diamond-point, and now constituting the all-important element of the signet, are executed with the greatest precision and care, far different to the careless wheel-cut letters on their predecessors, the later Sassanian seals. The square vertical Cufic distinguishes the earliest class, the flowing and curvilinear Persian—its field often filled in with flowers and stars—embellishes the later mediæval, and modern. The Cufic went out of use in the thirteenth century, and therefore the character employed gives a clue to the date of the signet.

The mechanical execution of many of these inscriptions is of the most perfect quality. Nothing can exceed the freedom and elegance of the curves, or the depth and boldness of the engraving; occurring, moreover, not unfrequently in the hardest stones, for admirable examples have been seen by me on the sapphire, the ruby, and the diamond!

These legends, beautiful as they may be to the eye of the artist, are the very plague of all Oriental scholars, who are constantly pestered by their unlearned friends to decipher for them some "engraving of a signet," which, after the words have been extricated with infinite labour from the caligraphic flourishes wherein they are entwined, enunciates some such truism as this: "What is destined will surely come to pass;" or a religious axiom or ejaculation, as, "Ali is the purest of men," "I pray for God's blessing upon Mohammed;" or—deepest bathos of all—eulogy on a *Captain Smith*, revenue-collector in some out-of-the-way East Indian province.

Pliny's remark we have already quoted, "that Eastern nations make no use of a seal, but are satisfied with the mere subscription of the name"—a fact which struck him with peculiar force, seeing the universal use of seals over the whole Roman world as the sole established mode of authenticating writings. But the Eastern fashion still continues unchanged; for the gem or metal signet inscribed with the owner's name and titles, and truly "*literis contenta solis*," is never impressed on wax, but *inked* over, and thus applied to the paper, after the manner of a copper-plate. By the term *Oriens* in this passage,



Parthia as well as India is designated; for the use of seals designed to imprint soft substances, such as clay or wax, which had originated in the primeval civilization of the Assyrians, seems to have been altogether abandoned during the domination of the Arsacidæ.

The seal-stones of all Mohammedan nations are universally set in *silver*, to which practice is due the loss of many a beautiful example of antique jewellery; for an ancient ring when found in the earth is directly melted up, and its gem remounted in silver, to do duty for a talisman. Large numbers of mediæval and modern silver rings are brought from Persia, set with late Roman or Sassanian intagli; these second mountings often displaying much taste, though simple enough in their pattern, more especially in those made for seals. This partiality for the poorer metal—paradoxical as it seems in a nation so much delighting in pomp and finery—springs from a religious notion thus mentioned by Tavernier (i. p. 654): "The royal goldsmiths . . . who make only silver rings, although competent to make them in gold; because the Persians, not being allowed to say their prayers when they have any gold about them, never wear either jewel or ring of gold, because it would be too troublesome to take them off and put them on again several times in the day. Hence, as our practice is to mount only in gold the gems we wear on our fingers, whenever I have sold the shah any stone set in a ring, he has had the ring immediately broken up, in order to set the stone in silver." The reason for the custom is given by Giulianelli: "Gold and silk being amongst the promised delights of Paradise, pious Mohammedans think to merit them by abstaining from their enjoyment in this life; on which account they never wear stuffs of entire silk, but of silk mixed with wool, nor ornaments composed of gold entirely, but with some portion made of silver."

There is another class of intagli, valueless indeed as regards art, but of extreme interest to the palæographer, in that they clearly point out the origin of the present Hebrew alphabet, more properly termed Chaldee. These are the gems bearing legends in what is now called the *Rabbinical* letter,—virtually the same, only more

simple in its forms, with the ornate sacred character, and many of which, occurring amongst stones brought from the East, are of an antiquity hitherto little suspected. The most interesting known to me is a small jacinth *en cabochon* (Hertz, now Waterton Collection), engraved with a strange object, a bundle of branches with a round fruit by the side,\* and the legend *Hillel Bar Mosch*, or, as read by a learned Hebraist (Bethel Jacob), *Halolo bar cohan Moshe*, "Hillel, son of Moses the priest." This jacinth is engraved in exactly the same manner as the Sassanian works in precious stones. This resemblance is particularly striking in the mode of forming the letters, and there can be no doubt it is of contemporary work with the earliest of that series. One feels tempted to indulge in the pleasing fancy that it may be that most precious of historical records, the signet of the famous Rabbi Hillel of Babylon, who flourished in the century before our era, and whose advent to Jerusalem was regarded as an inestimable accession to the collective wisdom of her doctors.

Amongst a lot of Cufic ring-stones brought from Bassora by M. Richard (1860), I discovered a small sard with a Hebrew legend in two lines, engraved by the antique process, testifying to an age fully equal to the last described. The name reads *Balsadi* or *Balsari*, which latter in Greek would become *Belisarius*. These two gems, therefore, are the oldest *genuine* monuments that exhibit the use of the present Hebrew alphabet. A third of more recent date, an octagonal carnelian set in a silver ring most fancifully shaped, had for legend, *Isaschar ha Cohen*, "Issachar the Priest."

This octagonal form of the seal-stone, so common in the Persian earlier cones, but neglected by the Sassanians, was again revived by the first subjects of the caliphs of Bagdad, and is very general for stones inscribed in Cufic, and yet more for those belonging to the

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\* Representing the *Lulab*, carried at the Feast of Tabernacles, made up of one branch of palm, two of willow, and three of myrtle. It was the national emblem of Judæa. This, together with the *etrom*, the horn of consecrated oil, the seven-branched candlestick, and the roll of the Law, form the regular decorations upon Jewish sarcophagi under the Lower Empire, many of which are to be seen in their newly discovered catacomb at Rome.



later period. Hence no doubt sprung in reality the preference for the octagonal form that marks all the mediæval signets of European nations.

Certain enormous gold rings, made, as it would seem, for the finger of Og himself, elaborately decorated with filigree-work, having a small temple surmounting the face, and inscribed on the inside with the Hebrew words *Metzul Tub*, "Blessing be with us," which sometimes are seen in collections, and puzzle the curious examiner to divine their original destination—these mysterious-looking jewels are the *wedding ring* of the synagogue, and serve that purpose in the marriage ceremony, being put on the fingers of the couple at a certain part in the rite. As may well be expected from their origin, these elaborate jewels often present most wonderfully-made specimens of the goldsmith's craft. Their pattern goes back to the remotest antiquity, having its prototype in the Greek Dionysiac rings, similarly carrying miniature shrines in gold, and which in their turn are but adoptions of a primeval Indian superstition. But this interesting subject must be reserved for discussion in a more appropriate section of this treatise.

Certain Hebrew seals are to be met with bearing a highly mystical device—two open hands, with their forefingers and thumbs joined into an equilateral triangle. A learned Rabbi informs me that this peculiar form expresses the position in which a *Cohen* (a descendant of Aaron the high-priest) holds his hands when pronouncing the sacerdotal benediction (Num. vi. 24-26; Levit. ix. 22). Through this opening the divine light of the Shekinah is believed to shine for the moment when all the congregation veil their eyes; for whoso dares to look is immediately struck blind in the right eye; and if he looks again, in the left also; and if a third time (to use a Hibernism), he is struck dead for his repeated impiety. The priest descended from Aaron on the father's side only, can only make one half of the sacred triangle, and dispense a moiety of the ineffable radiance. The almond rod that budded in the high-priest's hands, to prove his legitimacy, always is added to this figure for an explanatory symbol.



## EGYPTIAN INTAGLI.

THE Egyptian scarabei, or *beetle-stones*, to borrow the, for once, neat and convenient German name for them, may perhaps dispute with the Assyrian cylinders the claim of being the earliest productions of the glyptic art.\* They are so designated from the stone carrying the signet being carved into the shape of a beetle, frequently a most perfect copy of the actual insect.† On the flat base the hieroglyphs of the owner's name or titles are engraved, usually inclosed within a border. As for their materials, the larger proportion will be found cut out of steatite, or else a calcareous schist of different colours, blue, green, dark, and white; sometimes also in a soft limestone resembling chalk, which in many cases has been coated all over with the blue or green enamel to which the Egyptians were so partial. Many again are in blue vitrified clay, and some few in glass, but these last the

\* A steatite scarabeus (British Museum) bears the cartouche of Cheops, builder of the Great Pyramid, B.C. 2300, and therefore is somewhat anterior in date to Uruk's cylinder.

† This figure was so popular with the Egyptians for a very sufficient reason: they revered it as the symbol of the sun, *Phre*, and its habit of forming the balls of dung, the depositories for its eggs, aptly typified the creation of the globe.—(Plin. xxx. 30.)



rarest of all. They also occur in lapis-lazuli, carnelian, amethyst, basalt, and other hard stones; but probably (judging from their style) few of these belong to the ancient Pharaonic dynasties, but are rather to be referred to the Ptolemaic era, when the Greeks had introduced into the country their improved process of gem engraving.

The appearance of the work in the early specimens indicates that the harder stones were filed, so to speak, into shape with a fragment of emery, the "Thynic file" perhaps named by Mæcenas in his lines—

"Nec quos *Thynica lima* perpolivit  
Anellos, nec iaspidas lapillos."

A splinter of flint was probably the instrument used in the earliest ages for fashioning the beetles and engraving the hieroglyphics in the softer substances; for Herodotus notices the Ethiopian arrows "headed with the stone made sharp with which they also engrave their signets;"\* and in another passage the "Ethiopian stone" used for cutting open the corpse preparatory to embalment. That the stone in question was *flint*, is abundantly proved by the flint-headed arrows occasionally found in the mummy pits, as well as from their points annually turned up by the plough on the plains of Marathon, where the warriors described by Herodotus emptied their quivers.

Even the scarabei and the tablets in the blue enamelled terra-cotta seem to have been thus incised separately in the piece, after it had been modelled and dried, which was then dipped in the glaze and "fired." The scarabei in the softer stones were often enamelled by the same process.† This mode of their manufacture, which is per-

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\* *Αἰῶν ὅλης τετρακταίρος τῷ καὶ τὰς σφρηγίδας γλύφουσι.*—(vii. 69). Axes, knives, and spikes of flint abound on all the Primitive Chaldean mounds, of the times when metal was still very rare, bronze alone serving for tools and arms, iron for bracelets and bangles! Yet many cylinders of this early epoch exist in the hard stones, of very well finished work.

The Mexican sculptures in alabaster, and even harder stones, are known to have been carved by means of splinters of *obsidian*.

† To make the material pass for the precious lapis-lazuli, the cyanus of Theophrastus. This enamel is his artificial cyanus, "invented by one of the kings of Egypt."

ceptible on close examination, supplies a sure test for distinguishing the antique from the modern imitations now largely sent from the Potteries to Alexandria, for the benefit of "travellers up the Nile;" as the latter are all cast in moulds for the sake of expedition, being turned out by the gross.

Even in the best days of Egyptian art, although the beetles are neatly enough fashioned in the stone, yet they never equal in this respect the perfection of the Etruscan scarabei; the extraordinary truth to nature, and perfect finish of the latter surpassing all other works in relief in this department. There is also a difference in the *shape* of the insect itself (whether a peculiarity of the respective localities in the living beetle is unknown to me) which distinguishes those of the one nation from the other. In the Egyptian, the back of the wing-cases is evenly rounded off, whilst in the Etruscan, a raised ridge, in many specimens, runs along their line of junction, and gives a graceful curvature to the outline of the back.\*

The *hieroglyphics* composing the signet part, when interpreted, are found generally to contain the names of different kings of Egypt, with their titles, "Beloved of Amon-Ra;" "Beloved of Athor, the Lady of Lower Egypt;" "Son of the Sun;" "At peace through Truth," &c. Others bear figures of deities, and invocations unto them; such as the Sacred Asp and "The living Lord of the world;" the Hawk, with "The good God;" Osiris, with "The living Lord;" the Sun, with "Disposer of the Lower Region." And many other similar pious ejaculations, which are many centuries later reproduced in the Coptic character, on the Alexandrian Gnostic talismans made under the Roman domination. Some again present the names of private persons, with

\* Elian and Horapollo both describe the colour of the sacred scarabeus as *golden*. M. Cailland found in the vicinity of Senaar a green scarabeus with very brilliant coppery reflexions, which on this account he justly supposes to be true ancient species; observing that the scarabeus, whenever depicted on Egyptian monuments, is invariably coloured *green*, not black, although the latter is the colour of the kind common in Egypt and other southern countries (ii. p. 311). The Senaar negro girls wear tied round their neck, for a *fetish*, a certain coleopterous insect having a very hard leathery case, the inside of which they extract, and then replace the head (*ib.* 406). Here is the old fashion of Egypt in its most primitive form.



their offices, such as "The Baal of Truth;" or else boast the virtues professed by the owner, as "Truth;" or again, contain good wishes, "A happy life;" "May your name endure, and your being be renewed" —once the ornaments of nuptial, or presentation jewels.

The manufacture of these scarabei in such countless profusion, coupled with the circumstance of the majority of them bearing the *royal* superscription alone, utterly precluding the explanation that they were all signets and nothing more, is ingeniously and satisfactorily accounted for by San Quentino's theory that they circulated as tokens of value, and were the *small change* of the days of the Pharaohs. In confirmation, he quotes Plato's remark ('Eryxias,' p. 400): "In Ethiopia they use engraved stones instead of money." Be it remembered the Egyptians had no coinage whatever of their own before the Macedonian conquest; large sums were paid in gold and silver bars bent up into rings of a certain weight, as still used in Senaar; but the high civilization of the inhabitants must have rendered some representative of smaller values absolutely indispensable for the wants of daily life. Hence we find scarabei scattered so profusely amongst the bandages of the mummies, unstrung, and unset; perhaps the fee for the door-keepers of the other world, answering to Charon's *obolus* amongst the Greeks. A tradition about the currency of terra-cotta tokens, in lieu of coin, was to the last preserved amongst the ancients, and may probably be traced up to this source. In the decrepitude of the Roman Empire, the author of that singular treatise, 'De Rebus Bellicis' (a true 'Century of Inventions'), recommends as a relief to the exhausted treasury, a return to the primitive currency of earthenware and leathern tokens, to the ancient use of which he alludes as a well-known historical fact.\* Suidas, too (sub *Νοῦμμος*),

\* Which he mentions as long antecedent to the coinage of bronze. The statement deserves more attention than it has received from numismatists, for it is agreed that none of the *as grave* is anterior to the burning of Rome, a.c. 390. The existence of such a non-metallic currency also explains the anomaly of the wealthy Etruscans never possessing a currency of silver or gold like their Italiote neighbours, whose arts they so servilely copied in all other respects. As for the legend about Numa in the text, it is clearly a bit of ancient etymology based upon the mistaking *νόμος* for his time-honoured appellation.

quotes a lost work of Suetonius, to the effect that before the first coinage of bronze and iron by Numa, the Romans had nothing but clay and leathern tokens for that purpose. Of this "earthenware" money, the numerous terra-cotta disks or counters impressed with numerals, and frequently turned up on the sites of ancient Italian cities, are in all probability, actual extant examples. When Polyænus relates that the Athenian general, Timotheus, being in want of money to pay his troops, "issued his own seal" for coin, which substitute was accepted by the traders and market people confiding in his honour, he can only mean that *impressions* of it, in the clay then generally used for sealing, were put in circulation as representatives of value, and so received by the sellers. By a singular coincidence, we find the Egyptian Caliphs improving upon the policy of their primeval predecessors, and issuing in lieu of metal their elegant and imperishable counters of glass, with the legends coloured and in relief; pieces possessing every quality required in a representative of value, cleanliness, indestructibility by accident, and difficulty of imitation by the common forger.

These scarab-tokens must, however, be distinguished from those intended for signets, to which class belong all bearing the names of private individuals, and which for the most part have settings, or loops in gold, silver, or bronze. The enormous specimens in basalt, their faces covered with many lines of hieroglyphics, were doubtless the *official* seals of the times. Herodotus has remarked, that before any victim could be offered in sacrifice, it had first to be examined and approved by a priest, and then *sealed* with his signet. Castor, quoted by Plutarch (*De Isid.* 31), has preserved a description of the type upon this *sacerdotal* seal—that marvellous engine in every age for extracting fees. It represented "a man kneeling and threatened with death," a singular and somewhat vague description. But a frequent device on scarabei is a man kneeling and supporting on his two hands, above his head, the figure of a god, with sometimes heads of asps impending over him, clearly symbols of the threatened danger spoken of by Castor.



The primitive Egyptian intagli, whether mere minute hieroglyphics, or attempts at larger figures of men and beasts, are always extremely rude and roughly scratched into the stone, if a hard one, with no vestige of internal polish, that grand feature in the works of the classic nations.\* But the Ptolemaic epoch has bequeathed to us certain rare though splendid examples of Greco-Egyptian art, such as that head of a king in front face, very deeply cut in a brown sard, the brightest star formerly of the Hertz Collection.† This magnificent intaglio is the portrait of a Ptolemy, probably the fifth of the name, the face being that of a young person. It is represented in the same manner as the well-known bust of Memnon, the received mode of immortalising the regal divinities of the land; but the life-like fidelity of the Grecian portrait is here most artistically combined with the majestic repose distinguishing the conventional type of an Egyptian godhead. Its expression is absolutely marvellous, and to the attentive gaze produces the same effect of grandeur as the original colossus—

“Tantus honos operi, finesque inclusa per arcus—majestas!”

Amongst the Egyptian statuary of the British Museum, I seemed to recognize in a colossal bust, in sandstone, of a youthful prince of the same dynasty, features much resembling this gem portrait, and a treatment exhibiting the same well-managed union of the two styles. Equal in technical merit is the better known Cleopatra of the Marlborough Cabinet; a head in profile displaying, without any softening, the strongly-marked Jewish features of the memorable queen; her head covered with the skin of the Royal Vulture, which falls as a tippet over her neck, the established type for depicting female royalty. On the reverse, very deeply cut, stands the bust of Athor in front face within

\* There is a square tablet of yellow jasper (British Museum) bearing the cartouche of Amenophis II., B.C. 1450; but the bull, the principal figure, is engraved with such truth to nature, as well as technical perfection, as to prove this piece a work of the Phœnician school of much later times, or perhaps of the Ptolemaic.

† At the sale it brought the high price, for these days, of £40 10s. It subsequently passed into the Pulsky collection, where it obtained the title of “Antinous!” The British Museum has lately acquired this fine gem; also a similar Memnonian head in half-relief, in crystal, a work of large dimensions, and high artistic merit.

a shrine. The stone is a fine opaque jasper of an apple-green, an extremely rare species, only found at present in fragments intermixed in an Egyptian breccia. To the same school belongs the *Sacred Hawk* of the Berlin Cabinet, an intaglio sunk in the peculiar flat Egyptian manner, but with uncommon force and spirit; and amongst the Townley gems is a *replica* on a smaller scale, but equally deserving of commendation for those qualities.\*

When the Egyptian religion became fashionable at Rome under Hadrian's patronage, some very fine *camei* were produced in this style. The foremost in the list is the bust of Isis (or some princess in that character) in the Marlborough Cabinet, executed with marvellous finish in brown upon a white ground, the stone of considerable magnitude; and next to this, another of the same goddess, formerly in the Uzielli Collection, where her bust was worked out in flat relief and uncommon delicacy in the *black* layer of an onyx, and adorned with a profusion of minute curls and numerous rows of necklaces. A combat between the hippopotamus and crocodile (in the same collection) is depicted with great truth to nature in a minute green and white onyx.

Many good intagli owe their origin to this revival, to say nothing of the heads and figures of *Serapis*, in representing whom, both in cameo and in intaglio, Roman art has displayed its utmost capabilities. Portraits of *Roman* ladies as Isis, no longer disguised in the Nubian head-dress, but merely distinguished by the simple lotus-flower on the brow; heads of the child Horus, and full-length figures of Isiac priests and devotees, are often to be recognized amongst the gems of the second century. The Uzielli Collection possessed a singular monument of that age, the cylinder in plasma already quoted, surrounded by two rows of all the gods in the Egyptian Pantheon, very neatly done. But this specimen brings us down to the Alexandrian Abraxas stones, the

\* The importance of the profession at Alexandria in the time of the Ptolemies is curiously exemplified by the manner in which it is mentioned by the writer of 'Ecclesiastical,' a Jewish resident there. He reckons amongst those "without whom a city cannot be inhabited"—the carpenter, the smith, and the potter—"those also that cut and grave seals, and are diligent to make great variety, and give themselves to counterfeit imagery, and watch (curtail their sleep) to finish a work."—(xxxviii. 27.)



last and most adulterated phase of the fast expiring religion. To their "infinite variety" and countless multitude, I have devoted a separate treatise ('The Gnostics and their Remains,' 1864), as the extensiveness and peculiarity of the subject absolutely demanded. Suffice it here to say, that these talismanic gems were not merely in nature the direct fruit of the Alexandrian Kabala, which availed itself of the ancient iconology of the place to express its own ideas, but were for the most part actually manufactured in that city for exportation throughout the empire, as is manifested by their style of art, orthography, and materials.

Though the pure Egyptian engraver was so unsuccessful in intaglio, yet he possessed considerable skill in rilievo work, as the numerous charms in *hard stones* abundantly attest. They are carved out of lapis-lazuli, carnelian, a pale red jasper, easily mistaken for coral, and basalt; but as may be supposed, they chiefly abound in the favourite material, the blue-glazed terra-cotta. The most frequent is the *eye*, represented in profile, the symbol of Osiris, whose name signifies "all eye," a happy idea for the expression of omniscience, and still surviving in our figure of the Eye of Providence. *Hands*, the two fore-fingers extended in the act of giving the benediction; *Hearts*, called *Baidh*, "the soul's house;" *Horses' heads*; *Vases*, for holding the embalmed intestines, called *canopi*, after the god Cneph, whose name was thus Grecized.\* It is curious to trace the most ancient Hieratic symbols handed down through the Alexandrian syncretism to the Middle Ages, and thence to us. The tall cap and hooked staff of Osiris exists yet in the episcopal mitre and crozier; the *cruc ansata*, the most obvious expression of fecundation and increase that could be devised by primitive simplicity, and therefore the regular symbol of "Life," becoming by a simple inversion the orb surmounted by the cross, and the regular emblem of royalty, exactly as its prototype appears in the hands of the gods and deified monarchs of Egypt.

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\* The most important example of the class known to me is a couchant hippopotamus, cut out of a dark impure ruby, about two inches long, in the Pearse collection. This animal was the symbol of Typhon.

On the contrary, the *phalli* engraved in gems, and the hands closed "in obscenum modum," carved out of sard and amethyst, seem all, numerous as they are, to belong to Roman times, and illustrate the "res turpicula" of Festus, wont to be attached to the triumphal car, when the figure no longer stood (as in the East) merely for the symbol of life, but had become a "fascinum," to avert the ever dreaded evil eye, whose first stroke, alone powerful, expended all its poison on the object that first attracted it; whence the more preposterous and ridiculous the appearance of the latter, the better suited was it for a safeguard.

Although, as already remarked, the material serving for the primitive scarabei is either the softer kinds of stone, or else vitrified clay, yet many exist, more especially of the larger kind, carved out of basalt, one of the hardest materials that could be found. The lines of hieroglyphics covering the bases of the latter, form, by the rudeness of their execution, a striking contrast to the perfect neatness of the beetle figure itself. They usually present a rough and broken outline, as if scratched into the stone with the point of some harder substance, the management of which did not admit of any accuracy in its application. Both outlines, therefore, and interior of the figures, are extremely rough and ill-defined, altogether differing from the exact finish of similar works executed under the Greek and Roman masters of that country. The same remark applies to the hieroglyphics cut upon the larger monuments, which, from their broken outline, appear rather as if hammered into the stone, than cut out by a sharp instrument. The smaller engravings, there can be little question, were scratched in with fragments of emery-stone; the execution of the larger, as well as the mode in which such enormous blocks were worked, will doubtless ever remain a mystery. For it appears that the sculptors had only *bronze* chisels, which indeed are sometimes now discovered amongst the chippings from their work in the quarries, and that, too, for attacking granite and basalt, which now turn the edge of the best steel tools after a few strokes. Sir G. Wilkinson supposes that the sculptor used emery powder, laid upon the part to



be cut, and driven into the stone with a soft chisel, the powder thus forming in itself a perpetually renewed edge to the tool, capable of subduing the most impenetrable substances. Besides this, some means may have been known of softening the stone to a certain extent, a tradition of which seems preserved in the curious recipes given by Heraclius for subduing crystal and other gems; and this, aided by that greatest engine, an unlimited supply of cheap labour, may afford a plausible solution of the difficulty.

The art of tempering steel so as to cut porphyry, was discovered by Cosimo I. dei Medici, a great experimental chemist, much to his glory amongst his contemporaries. Cicognetti, a Roman architect, who executed an altar in Cardinal Tosti's chapel in St. Maria Maggiore, the reredos of which was decorated with some small porphyry columns, informed me that the only plan known at present for softening that stone, is to steep it for several weeks in urine, and that even then it is only worked with extreme difficulty. It cost the French, workmen supplied with the best modern tools, six weeks incessant labour only to cut a small groove around the base of the Luxor obelisk, before removing it from its pedestal. And yet long after the date of these Egyptian monuments, so profusely embellished with sculptures, enormous columns, besides statues and bas-reliefs, continued to be made by the Romans down to the very close of the Western Empire. Nothing gives one a more vivid idea of imperial magnificence than the monuments in that stone of the Empress Helena, and of her granddaughter Constantia, sculptured out of enormous blocks, enriched with busts and elaborate groups in alto-relievo, the mere repolishing and restoration of which, on their removal to the Vatican Museum, occupied numerous workmen for the space of seven years.





## ETRUSCAN, GREEK, AND PHŒNICIAN SCARABEI.

THESE three classes will be most conveniently treated of under one head, because there is the same difficulty in distinguishing intagli belonging to the Archaic-Greek (or rather Greco-Italian) style from the genuine Etruscan, as there is in settling the long-agitated question, whether the majority of vases found in Etruria are of home manufacture or importations from the city of potters, Corinth, or from the Athenian Ceramicus.

In order, however, to conduct this investigation upon fixed principles, I will preface it with my own opinion (based upon several considerations, to be more fully set forth in a following chapter), that scarabei proper, that is, in the form of the actual beetle, belong, as a general rule, to the Etruscans, or to the Greeks of Italy; whereas the scarabeoid form was the prevailing fashion amongst the inhabitants of Greece\* herself, during the period when art in both countries was in precisely the same stage of its development, and beyond which it

\* The only allusion to the scarabeus to be found in a Greek author is the very uncertain one of the comic writer, Antiphates, in his 'Beotia' (as quoted by Athenæus, xi. 474), who mentions the *κάρθαρος*, "a small female ornament." We often find scarabei mounted as pendants in Etruscan necklaces.



never advanced amongst the Etruscan race, owing to the sudden and complete overthrow of their prosperity by the great Gallic invasion.

But with the Etruscans, Asiatic Tyrrheni, partly colonists from Lydia, led by chiefs of the Assyrian stock, descendants of Sandon, the Babylonian Hercules (hence styled *Heraclidæ* by the Greeks), the art of gem-engraving, that especial invention of the Assyrians, was most zealously cultivated, and traces of it, as well as of perfection in metallurgy, are to be found wherever the Tyrrheni obtained a settlement. Pythagoras is said by Hermippus to have been the son of Mnesarchus, a gem engraver, and a *Tyrrhene* according to Aristotle, a native of one of those islands out of which that ancient race had been expelled by the Athenians—a notice evidently alluding to the Pelasgi and their expulsion from Lemnos, described at length by Herodotus (vi. 138). Samos afforded them a refuge, hence it is probable enough that Theodorus, the first gem-engraver, as well as statuary, of high reputation, belonged to the same race of Tyrrheni, who maintained amongst the rude, “restless” Hellenes, the same character for skill in metallurgy as the Dwerga race amongst the Scandinavians. Aristotle’s notice proves the high antiquity of the art amongst the Tyrrheni, marked by its already constituting a distinct profession, a testimony in itself to the civilization of the race at so remote a period, nearly seven centuries before our era.

The Etruscans, in their flourishing times, as the undisputed masters of the seas, carried on a vast commerce with all the states lying upon the Mediterranean, the Ægean, and the Adriatic; sometimes uniting their fleets with the Carthaginians, sometimes scouring the seas in great force as pirates, the two professions being by no means incompatible, according to the then prevailing notions. Quintus Curtius records that, at the moment of Alexander’s accession to the throne, a fleet of Tuscan pirates, “to fill up the measure of his misfortunes,” was ravaging the Macedonian coast. And it is a thing somewhat at variance with the popular belief in Grecian pre-eminence in art in every age, that Etruria supplied Athens herself with works in the precious metals, as well as with all articles in bronze, either useful

or ornamental, even in the days of Socrates. This may be gathered from the lines of his disciple, Critias, preserved by Athenæus (i. 50).

Τυρσηνὴ δὲ κρατεῖ χρυσότυπος φιάλη  
καὶ πᾶς χάλκος ὅτις κοσμεῖ δόμον ἐν τινὶ χρεῖα.

"Etruria bears the palm for gold-wrought bowls,  
And all the bronze that ornaments our dwellings."

To the same effect Pherecrates, the contemporary of Plato, asks, in his 'Crapatala' (Ath. xv. 700), τίς τῶν λυχνείων ἡ ῥηασία—Τυρσηνική. "What is the fashion of these lamps? The Etruscan." Whereupon Athenæus adds the comment: "For there were many manufactures amongst the Tyrrheni (πολλὰ ἐργασίαι), they being an art-loving people." The Etruscans were naturally led to perfection in this manufacture, like their descendants, the Florentines in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, from the inexhaustible supplies of copper they drew from Monte Catino (still a source of great profit to the company working the mines) as well as Campania. "Tyrrhena Sigilla," the statuettes still so highly prized, are enumerated by Horace amongst the objects of art especially coveted by the amateurs of his day.\* Pliny notices the "Tuscan Apollo," a colossus fifty feet high, then adorning the Palatine library, as equally admirable for material and workmanship; also the "Signa Tuscanica," scattered all over the world, and "made beyond all doubt in Etruria." Volsinii, the wealthiest of the Etruscan towns, possessed, at the time of its capture by the Romans, two thousand statues, according to Metrodorus Scepsius, who ascribes this very wealth in art as the true motive of the Roman attack (xxxiv. 16). These Volsinian spoils were necessarily all of metal, terra-cotta figures, the only other material of the Etruscan statuary, not being likely to tempt the greed of the She-wolf.

\* The prevalent mania for collecting such archaic works is laughed at by our poet when he makes his model connoisseur, Damasippus, beggar himself by buying up "Sisyphus' old foot-pans, and whatever was clumsily sculptured or stiffly cast, and pricing a statue of the sort at a thousand pounds."

———"Olim nam querere anabam  
Quo vafer ille pedes lavisset Sisyphus aere,  
Quod sculptum infabre quod fustum darius esset,  
Callidus huic signo ponebam millia centum."



Propertius devotes one of his prettiest poems (iv. 2) to the minute description of one of these trophies, still standing in the forum in the days of Augustus, and still admired. It was a Vertumnus, bearing the attributes of every trade and occupation, and preserving the name of its maker, Mamurins.

The communication between Etruria and Egypt is exemplified in a very striking manner in her adoption of the beetle-form for the signet (although with so much improvement upon the pattern,\* both as to material and execution), to the complete abandonment of the national Assyrian fashions, the cylinder and the later conical stamp, of which types not a single example has ever been discovered amongst Tuscan remains. This intercourse with Egypt, and communication of religious ideas, is exemplified yet more curiously by the marble canopi and the gold jewels discovered at Vulci.† The pendants to some of the necklaces are the well-known enamelled terra-cotta figurines of the god Phtha, but mounted in Etruscan settings (Micali. Pl. 45, 46). The Etruscans, though so far superior to the Egyptians in many other arts, knew nothing of glass-making or enamelling, a fact singularly attested by the parti-coloured paste (Bale collection) in its most ornate and valuable setting in their peculiar style, a proof that they had mistaken the artificial production for a novel gem, and of the highest rarity.

But to come to Etruscan glyptics—the beetles are found carved in a great variety of stones; from the emerald got from Egypt,‡ and the Indian carbuncle, even to amber; but by far the largest

\* Perhaps not directly, but at second-hand from the Phœnicians, at one time a portion of the subjects of the Egyptian monarchy.

† But the most convincing proof that I have met with of this intercourse is afforded by a *rhylton* amongst Lord Cadogan's vases, modelled into a group of a Nubian seized by a crocodile, which is snapping off his arm just above the elbow. The truth to nature, both in the depicting the man and his grotesque agony, as well as the attack of the crocodile, evidently show that the modeller must have himself witnessed such a scene. One working after a traveller's tale only would have shown the monster swallowing up the native *whole*. (Sold for £12 10s., March, 1865.) Also the Busiris vase (Campana), where that king and his attendants are represented as true negroes even to their costume.

‡ A scarabœoid (Townley), a large and tolerably fine emerald, almost in its native form, is engraved in the Etruscan style, with the easily recognised Egyptian goose.

number are in the common red carnelian so plentifully supplied by the beds of their own torrents. Many, however, and these, too, presenting intagli in the most inartificial style, a strange contrast to the perfect execution of the beetle itself, are formed in the finest Oriental sard, and even the sardonix and the nicolo; the two last invariably cut athwart the layers, so that the head, middle, and tail portions of the insect are given in three different and strongly contrasted colours.

All are nearly of the same size, although there exist a few exceptions in miniature, when the precious stones are employed. The majority, therefore, seldom exceed one inch in length, and in this particular differ widely from their Egyptian prototypes, which vary from the colossal beetle,\* measuring a yard or more across the back, down to the tiny pendant no bigger than a fly. Ælian states that the warrior caste in Egypt wore beetles in their rings as a badge of their profession; hence Köhler conjectures that amongst the Etruscans, originally the scarabeus was a military distinction, and he gives this as the reason for the warlike character of the devices, combats, chariots, and the like, usually gracing those belonging to this nation. Its reputation as an amulet survived the fall of Rome. One engraved with Hercules at the Fountain, was, according to Chiflet, discovered amongst the other jewels in Childeric's tomb at Tournay.

We come now to the intagli engraved upon their base; and here a striking peculiarity cannot fail to arrest the attention of the critical observer. It may be said that no middle class is to be discovered interposed between the rude designs entirely executed with the drill and engravings of miraculous finish almost entirely cut with the diamond-point, in shallow and flat intaglio. The former most unmistakably declare the Eastern origin of their engraver's art, for the figures upon them are created merely by the juxtaposition of shallow holes produced by the point of a blunt drill, sunk to different depths, and so united as to give a rude outline of the subject aimed at, precisely in the same manner as the figures were done

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\* Like that one making the pavement groan in the Egyptian Room, British Museum, "the almightiest bug" of the astounded Yankee traveller.



on many of the Babylonian cylinders, and yet more conspicuously on the conical seals. Their usual subjects are animals—strange Oriental monsters and beasts of chase, but above all, subjects connected with potation, bearing out the national character for sottishness (as given by Timæus and Diodorus)—boys with amphoræ, drunken fauns in every possible attitude,\* and, above all, the exploits of Hercules, the fabulous ancestor of the royal line.† Yet such engravings, displaying apparently the very infancy of the glyptic art, often fill the base of large beetles most artistically cut out in the finest sards, and enchased in mountings that show the inimitable perfection to which the goldsmith's art had already attained. The second class, on the other hand, give us scenes from the Epic Cycle, chiefly connected with the tale of Thebes, amongst which, besides the national Hercules, the stories of Philoctetes, Capaneus, and Bellerophon, occur with remarkable and significant frequency. But this curious subject has been considered in detail in another place.‡

The usual finish to all these designs is a border§ enclosing them, for the most part formed by a succession of small parallel strokes closely set together between two lines, like the *milling* round the edge of a modern coin, but in others carefully worked in the pattern known as the *guilloche*, resembling a wide-linked chain or a loosely-twisted cable. This identical guilloche forms the usual border to the coins of certain most ancient cities in Magna Græcia, as Caulonia, Metapontum, Siris, and Sybaris. The type of the Apollo Purificator, and

\* The national deities of the Thracians (the original Tyrrheni) were, according to Herodotus, Bacchus, Mars, Diana.

† Another reason for the popularity of Hercules may have been his character as tutelary god of Tyre and Carthage.

‡ 'Handbook,' p. 28.

§ This border furnishes one of the surest means of distinction between the Etruscan and the pure Greek scarabei. In the latter the design is always inclosed within a single line, very accurately drawn, as if the better taste of the Greek had prevented him from wasting his labour on the intricate trifling of the *Etruscan* border. Striking examples are the Stork of Dexamenos the Chian (to be described further on), and his (so-called) Demosthenes, almost an equal miracle of art. The Phœnicians, too, usually border their scarabei by a single line.

of the river-god on the didrachms of the first and second cities, and of the long-horned ox, *regardant* (much resembling an antelope), on those of the other two, are done in a peculiar flat, stiff manner, highly finished, and very similar to that of the gems in question, with which they doubtless were cœval. Hence may be deduced a conclusion of great importance to our inquiry—that these perfectly engraved intagli are not due to the real Etruscans, but to the *primitive* Greek colonists\* on the Italian coasts, who had adopted and improved upon their national fashion. Now as Sybaris was utterly destroyed (as she had previously done by her neighbour, Siris), B.C. 510, and never afterwards restored under the same name, Thurii rising from her ruins, all her coins must have been minted within the two centuries before that date; and from this fixed point† a notion can be obtained as to the real epoch of intagli corresponding with them in style and workmanship; for it must be borne in mind that the gem-engravers were also the die-sinkers in every age of antiquity. It must be remembered the primitive Greek colonists were *totally* ignorant of engraved gems; their signets found in the tombs of their oldest colony, Cumæ, are rudely cut in *silver rings*. They borrowed the beetle-stone from their Asiatic neighbours, the Etruscan new-comers, and with their native taste carried the rude art of that race to the perfection of the “Tydeus,” and the “Icadius.”

This absence of mediocre works to form a connection between extreme barbarism and the highest refinement of art—the two limits between which the Roman class afterwards present us with every shade of gradation—would seem to warrant this solution of the difficulty by attributing the one class to the Asiatic settlers, the other to the Pelasgic. The great and obvious difficulty, however, to this solution, lies in the names of the *heroes* represented, sometimes put on the

\* Sybaris was founded by a colony from Trœzene shortly after the Trojan war. Metapontum by Pythians returning from the same expedition; legends only proving these cities Pelasgic, not Hellenic, and of the highest antiquity.

† Which also fixes that of all coins of the other Pelasgic cities in that very peculiar, local style, with *incuse* types inclosed within the guilloché border.



best executed intagli, which are spelt in that peculiarly "clipped" form customary in the graffiti on the mirror backs, the Etruscan origin of which no one can dispute. It seems hardly conceivable for the Greco-Italians, even though their native tongue was the rudest and most archaic of dialects — "barbarous," as Herodotus terms it — to have so strangely corrupted the names of their national heroes.

The alphabet used both on the gems and the mirrors is the primitive Pelasgic of sixteen letters, brought by Cadmus into Greece, containing symbols for the three *long* vowels only. Pliny (vii. 57) remarks upon the identity of this ancient Greek alphabet with the Roman. Many centuries before his epoch the "general tacit consent of mankind had agreed to adopt the *Ionic* characters" (the present Greek capitals) for the purposes of literature. The latter were only adopted at *Athens* in the archonship of Euclides, B.C. 405 (Plut. 'Aristides').

This spelling, indeed, more than anything else, distinguishes the Italic scarabei from the rare specimens with legends discovered in Greece itself, which now remain to be noticed. These have the *owner's* name written correctly and in full below the device itself. Of the class, the most interesting is the signet of Creontidas, which, to use the words of Finlay the historian, "passed into my possession from his tomb in Egina, when it was opened in 1825." The first owner seems to have entertained a high opinion of the virtue of the symbol, for the device upon it is also the scarabeus with expanded wings in the act of flying. Below is his name in large characters, KPEONTIDAA,\* reading from left to right, and therefore giving the same in the impression from right to left, showing such to have been the then prevailing mode of writing Greek, and thus attesting the extreme remoteness of the epoch to which the relic must be referred. The intaglio is neat, but very shallow and slight, apparently done entirely

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\* The character used upon *Greek* scarabei is invariably the elegant erect Ionic. The slanting, semi-Punic letters of Cadmus were then obsolete in Hellas, and only retained in Etruria. We have in our times a curious parallel in the Gothic *black-letter*, at the invention of printing the universal European, now confined to the tasteless Teutonic press.

with the diamond point, and differing altogether from the characteristic technique of Etruscan work. The second, in black agate, found on the site of Troy, bears an intaglio in the best archaic style, a girl kneeling with her pitcher at a fountain gushing forth from a lion's head. In the field is ΣΕΜΟΝΟΣ, "Of Semon," written, as in the preceding case, and in large letters. It is now in Professor Gerhard's collection. Most remarkable of all is the third, in sard, found more recently at Kertch (now in the Russian Collection). The gem is on a somewhat large scale, device a stork flying, with the legend reading on the stone ΔΕΞΑΜΕΝΟΣ  
ΕΠΟΙΕΧΙΟΣ. One cannot help discovering in the

stork (*πελαργός*) an intentional allusion to the nationality of the artist, who doubtless prided himself on belonging to the stock of the "old people." Strabo says the Chians boasted of their descent from the Pelasgians, whom the more recent Hellenes nick-named "storks," from their repeated but enforced migrations. Another, found at Pergamos, type, a lioness charging, bears the name, Aristoteiches, filling up the field; and, lastly, one from Volterra, that of Lysandros.

Here it will be observed that, contrary to the universal practice on the Etruscan scarabei, the names in every case refer to the owner, not to the personages represented. Another conspicuous diversity is the large size of the lettering, which in the Etruscan inscriptions is always so microscopic as to make it difficult to conceive how it could have been executed by the unassisted sight.

Greek intagli for the most part are found in the stone improperly now termed the "golden sard," but which in ancient nomenclature was a species of the jaspis—probably the "terebinthizusa." From my own experience, I should say the Etruscans were ignorant of this species, or, at least, never used it for scarabei. A large number of gems in the archaic style have evidently been sawn off from scarabei or scarabecoids, for they often retain the trace of the longitudinal perforation. This was done without doubt as frequently in ancient times, after the fashion of wearing swivel-gems had gone by, as it was, unfortunately, in the last century, for the purpose of setting the



intaglio in a ring—the religious idea involved in the beetle symbol having become obsolete. And such was early the case; but it seems to have continued in use in necklaces for some ages longer from the above-quoted remark of Antiphates, speaking of the *κάνθαρος* (beetle) as “a little ornament worn by women.”

It is hard to even invent a theory satisfactorily accounting for this peculiarly Egyptian symbol's becoming so zealously adopted by the Etruscans. There was no affinity in their religious systems; their gods were the primal Scythic joined with the Pelasgian deities, Tinia (Jupiter), Sethlans (Vulcan), Pupluns (Bacchus), Menfre (Minerva), Turan (Venus), resembling the Egyptian correspondents in neither name nor form. Their religion chiefly consisted in the observation of the signs afforded by the heavens; hence their peculiar institution the augurs; and though, like the Egyptians, they paid particular attention to the ornamentation of the sepulchre, yet they usually disposed of the corpse by *burning*—a mode of all others the most repugnant to the ideas of the former nation—those firm believers in the *resurrection of the body*. Whether they saw in the prodigious comparative strength of the ever-toiling beetle a certain analogy to the distinctive qualities of the father and god of the royal house of Sardis, is a conjecture which may be permitted in the absence of distinct information. The solution of the difficulty that, after long consideration, gives the most satisfaction to myself, founded upon trustworthy data to be discussed when we treat of the tomb treasures of Tharros, makes the Etruscans adopt from their friends and allies the Phœnicians the beetle form of the signet as the best and most convenient then known, and recommended by the example of the most civilized and learned nation of the times. It must be remembered the only other patterns then in existence to compete with it were the cylinder and the cone, which the Phœnicians had never (so to speak) patronised.

There is a remarkable peculiarity in certain scarabei (though of very rare occurrence), that they present the very earliest essays at *cameo* engraving. The back of the beetle has been carved into

a different figure in half-relief, finished with the same minute excellence that has been already noticed in the carving of the insect itself—all, beyond dispute, the work of the same hand, not the addition of an improving taste. Of such primitive camei the most important known are:—a warrior in full panoply (Mars?), kneeling, as if awaiting the enemy's onset, on the back of a scarabeus, the face of which bears the almost national *Phœnician* device of a lion pulling down a stag, within a guilloche border—a work of singular merit. (Durand collection, given in the 'Impronte Gemmarie,' Cent. iii. 1). A Syren tearing her breasts in an agony of despair, well explained by Köhler as the genius of Death, and referring to the subject of the intaglio itself, the slain Achilles borne off the field by Ajax\* (now in the Russian Cabinet, and beautifully engraved in the 'Orleans Gems,' II. Pl. 2\*).—Victory kneeling—an excellent alto-relievo, evidently allusive to subject of the signet—Thetis presenting his new arms to Achilles.† Another singular specimen was in the Mertens-Schaffhausen Collection, No. 171, where the cameo occupying the back makes a large mask whose chin and beard are formed by the body and wings of a fly cut out in the white stratum upon the black of an agate of two layers: the intaglio, Jupiter nude, darting the thunderbolt; in the field, the bust of Rhea (Astarte) crowned with towers. The figure of Jupiter has a foreign character, somewhat in the *Phœnician* style, and a similar head, tower-crowned, is a common type upon the coins of that nation. The strange compound of human face and insect, of which many other examples are known, symbolises the redoubtable Baal-zebul, "Lord of flies," so much revered by all the Syrians, and later by the Greeks, under the title of Zeus Apomyios—and with very good reason, if indeed his power protected his worshipper against the persecution of his bloodthirsty insect hosts.‡ Another scarabeus

\* A Blacas scarabeoid, subject, the Death of Capaneus, has on its back the figure of a kneeling negro carrying a *situla*, in the faintest possible relief.

† Shown me June 25th, 1863, by Castellani, who, fancying it unique in style, valued it at £100.

‡ Köhler has figured several scarabei formed into a head of this kind. Everything combines to induce us to assign them to the *Phœnicians*.



has come under my notice, cut into a grinning full-faced mask, or rather the original Gorgon's head, that most potent of amulets; and in the Waterton Collection is a head of Ganymede in profile, the field of the stone covered with the feathers of the giant eagle bearing him aloft—a minutely finished relief, which, from its convexity, seems originally to have formed the back of a scarabeus—the earliest example of a cameo-portrait in existence.

The cemeteries of that most ancient colony of the Phœnicians, Tharros in Sardinia, have recently yielded an abundant harvest of scarabei belonging to that nation, intermixed with genuine Egyptian and Etruscan stones of the same shape. The Phœnicians in their style and subjects exhibit a curious analogy to both the latter so widely separated classes, and throw, at last, some light upon the source whence the beetle form was borrowed by their allies, the Tyrrheni of Italy. Their material is almost universally a soft opaque green stone, perhaps serpentine, that admits of being carved by a steel instrument. The engravings in their *technique* closely resemble the better-executed cylinders, the drawing accurate, and far superior to that on the contemporary Etruscan works found in their company. The figures are deeply cut and neatly finished, though somewhat stiff, the character of all Asiatic design; yet many of the animals, the lions and the antelopes, display wonderful spirit and freedom in their treatment. But this interesting class will be more fully considered in the following chapter.\*

Some scarabei occur of large size and sculptured in coloured marbles: their Roman style declares them to be the offspring of the revival of Egyptian notions in Hadrian's times. Scarabei also, of early primitive Egyptian date, often occur with Gnostic *devices* cut upon their bases; but the disparity between the two shows the latter to be additions made by these syncretistic religionists at a period of incipient barbarism. And here must be noticed a superadded inscription, giving

\* A large collection of these stones, with other sepulchral relics, was brought for exhibition to London in 1857 by the Com. Barbetti, and afterwards sold by Christie and Manson.

the relic a far higher historical interest than anything of the sort that has ever fallen in my way. A scarabeus (Brit. Mus.), in striped agate of the brightest hues, the stripes of the head and tail portions curiously divergent, bears the intaglio, in the ruder Etruscan style, of a priest holding a thurible by its chain over an altar. In the margin of the field, in neatly cut late Greek lettering, is ANNIA CERBATH, which can mean no other than Annia Faustina, wife of Elagabalus. In the type doubtless was recognized her imperial priest-lord, SACERDOS DEI SOLIS ELACAB, as he styles himself on his coins; and some mystic reason had caused this scarabeus to be held in special honour as a potent talisman by the lady who has given it its present value by the addition of her signature.

This is the fitting place briefly to notice the manner in which these beetles were worn, whether for use or for ornament, by their original possessors. The first and simplest was that of threading the *scarabeus* on a string, and wearing it tied round the wrist for a bracelet, a commodious fashion, patronised by Jove himself, who appears in a vase-painting figured by Visconti (Op. Var. ii. 1), seated on his throne in heaven, bearing his eagle-topped sceptre, and on his wrist a large oval stone strung upon a very fine thread. Sometimes they were intermingled with other beads in the necklace, but probably more as amulets in such a position than as signets. As an illustration of this fashion, that paragon of necklaces found in Tuscany in 1852 requires a particular description: it gives, besides, some idea of the extreme elaborateness of Etruscan jewellery. It is composed of a chain eleven inches long and a quarter of an inch in diameter, woven out of the finest gold wire, each end terminating in bands of scroll work with loops attached. From this chain depend thirty-two others, each one and a quarter inch in length, of a curb pattern, the alternate links to the right and left forming a diamond. Between these chains, and attached to the main chain, are sixteen full-faced, bearded heads of Bacchus. In the centre of each diamond formed by the smaller chains are alternately six full-faced Harpies in a seated posture, and seven diota-shaped ornaments. Between these comes another row of scallop-



shells, fourteen in number. At the point of each diamond, alternately, are suspended *scarabei* in onyx and amber, mounted in borders of fine wire-work; the other points have full-faced Harpies (rather, Syrens), in gold, their wings curving gracefully upwards above their shoulders. (This wonderful specimen of the goldsmith's skill sold for 160*l.*, at Sotheby and Wilkinson's in 1856.)

At the same sale the equally unique ring from the Canino Collection was secured for the British Museum at the low price of 27*l.* Subjoined is its accurate description from the sale catalogue: "It is formed on each side of a lion, their heads facing, and the front paws of each supporting a border of fine grain work, in which is set a *scarabeus* of sardonyx, engraved with a lion, his head turned back towards the left." Such an arrangement, much simplified, became the customary form of the Etruscan finger-ring when the swivel had gone out of date; a thick hollow circular shank, more or less embellished with filigree scrolls, holds between its opened ends a *box* with pierced work sides, so as to display its contents, the inclosed *scarabeus* placed with the intaglio upwards. This method was followed by that of sawing off the intaglio itself, and setting it in a solid bezel, like the simple ring stones then becoming the universal fashion.

The usual mode, however, of mounting the *scarabeus* for wearing on the finger, was the *swivel*, a wire passing through the perforated axis of the stone (of which the edge was generally cased in gold for protection), then brought through holes in each end of a gold\* cylindrical bar with tapering points bent nearly in a circle, so as to fit the finger—apparently, to judge from the size, the fore-finger of the left hand—on which the mummies often retain it when uncased, and exposed to modern curiosity. To give security, and at the same time a finish to the work, the ends of the wire on which the beetle revolves are often twisted evenly for some distance down each extremity of the shank. Sometimes each point of the latter terminates

\* The almost universal mode of mounting the Egyptian stones; the swivels of which are singularly rude and ineffectual, a strong contrast to the elegance and variety of the Etruscan.

in a flat disk, shielding each extremity of the stone. The shank part was treated, as we might expect from such tasteful jewellers, in a great variety of fashions, and often made extremely ornamental. Thus one pattern is a broad flat band of plaited gold wire; another, more elaborate, *ends* in rams' or antelopes' heads artistically chased, the pivot entering the mouth of each; a third makes a serpent, the head forming one of the points of support, the tail tied into a knot the other. Again, the pattern was varied by bending a stout quadrangular wire upon itself, so as to form an open loop; the long ends were then twined back so as nearly to meet, and being pointed, entered the perforation of the stone at opposite ends, the same wire thus becoming both the pivot and the handle of the signet. Such a mounting was not adapted for the finger, but to hang as a pendant from the neck. This mode of wearing the signet was occasionally used by the Egyptians, but still more generally by the Phœnicians; sailors and travellers, they doubtless found rings on the fingers very inconvenient appendages; but the luxurious Etruscans never patronised this simple and economical mode of setting.

The scarabeoids of the Greeks, both of the main land and of Asia Minor, seem always to have been carried on a simple string; none at least have come down to our times in the swivels, and other settings so plentifully bequeathed us by their Etruscan contemporaries.

A curious kind of natural signet was in use at Athens in the days of Aristophanes, the invention whereof he jocosely assigns to the subtle genius of the misogynist Euripides (*Thesmoph.* 423). It being discovered that sly wives were able to get a facsimile of their husbands' signets for the low price of half a drachma, and thereby to open, without risk of detection, all cupboards sealed up by their lords, Euripides had taught the latter to impress the wax or clay securing\* the doors with bits of worm-eaten wood, *θριπηδεστὰ σφραγίδια*. The curious meanders traced on their surface by the "fairies' coachmaker" were quite beyond all imitation by art, and thus supplied a seal

\* The ancient substitute for locks and keys.



impossible to be counterfeited. Caylus has figured an intaglio on stone, a mere assemblage of wavy lines curiously intertwining, which he takes, and probably with reason, for an imitation of such a natural signet.

The *furor* of Italian and German amateurs having for the last half century been especially directed towards the acquisition of Etruscan scarabei, has opened a profitable field to the fraudulent ingenuity of many recent engravers, who lacking the skill to reproduce with success the fine works of the Greek or Roman schools, are yet able to imitate pretty exactly the quaint and stiff figures and unfinished execution of these primitive monuments of their art. Hence the manufacture of fictitious scarabei to imitate the Etruscan and Greco-Italian is even now in full activity. As an illustration of this fact, in looking over a large collection disposed of in London by a Florentine dealer, Marsigli (1856), who had expected to make his fortune by the venture (at the expense of the English amateur, that creature of gold and gullibility, according to Italian tradition), out of the long list of scarabei brought over I found every one was false, and so transparently bad, that one would have supposed them just manufactured to the importer's order for the anticipated market. But there is one salient distinction, fortunately overlooked by the mechanical modern fabricator; in the antique the *beetle* was the important part, and is carefully, often exquisitely finished, as already observed, however unskilful or even barbarous the intaglio cut upon its base. But exactly the converse holds for those of the modern fabrique, where the intaglio, the selling portion *now*, has received all the engraver's attention, the beetle part being merely sketched out as subsidiary, with the legs, wing cases, and other details barely indicated by a few random cuts with the wheel upon the convex sides and back of the carnelian. Besides this, the intaglio itself often shows edges rough and jagged, betraying the rapid operation of the modern instrument, differing *toto cœlo* from the true antique work in this class which bears the appearance of having been *imprinted* on a soft substance, all the outlines fading gently away, and the interior, however rude the drawing,

highly polished. There is again a higher class of forgeries due to the more skilful hands of the close of the last century, much more deceptive, being often cut on the base of genuine scarabei, the rude original design having been obliterated to make place for the improvement; but the latter, by some strange oversight of the artist, generally consists of figures in the Roman style, deeply cut and naturally drawn, without any of the necessary and characteristic archaic stiffness about them. Again, if the entire beetle be modern, it will often be found made of amethyst, a stone which, as far as my own experience extends, has been employed by the ancient Etruscans for this purpose in no more than two instances.







## SCARABEI OF THARROS.

THARROS, the most ancient city of the island of Sardinia, seems to have been peopled conjointly by settlers of three very distinct races, the Egyptians, the Phœnicians, and the Etruscans. In the tombs recently explored, were found abundance of the peculiar relics of the first-named people, their terra-cotta glazed little idols, beads, and scarabei in green jasper and soft stone, of which it is unnecessary here to speak at length.\* But of the two other nations, the relics offer many peculiarities, some, hereafter to be particularized, of the most puzzling character. The gems belonging to them all take the form of scarabei, neither cylinders nor cones occurring amidst so large a number, although a sprinkling of them might have been reasonably looked for amongst the relics of an Asiatic race.

The material of some of the Phœnician scarabei is carnelian; but of the majority a dull green stone, resembling jasper, but much softer, so as to be readily cut with a steel point, yet taking and well preserving a considerable though somewhat *fatty* polish in spite of its tenderness. It is probably a pure green serpentine; and its soft nature serves in some measure to explain certain puzzling circumstances connected with many of the works in it.

\* These articles, despite their numbers, may have been only importations, brought from Egypt by the Phœnician traders.

Nevertheless a few, probably the most ancient, are actually in a true, hard, blackish jasper, and present purely Egyptian types, such as the figure of a man seated, his hand raised to his lips in adoration before a cippus, surmounted by three globes placed vertically one above the other. This intaglio, however, is not cut in the usual rough Egyptian manner of working in hard stones, but rather sunk entirely by the blunt drill after the specially Etruscan fashion. Another of remarkably finished work bears a standing figure in the Egyptian dress, supporting upon his head and uplifted hands a cartouche,\* whence several royal asps rear themselves aloft. The stone is the soft green material already described.

But the greater part of the large number examined by myself are purely Phœnician, presenting designs of that grotesque, or rather symbolical nature, which so conspicuously distinguished the taste of that nation from the Greek; an example of which Herodotus indicates in his allusion to the *Pataci*, or dwarfish figures ornamenting and protecting their ships (like our figure-heads), "in the shape of a pygmy," which so much excited the scornful mirth of the iconoclast Cambyses (iii. 37).† This nation of traders, the Dutch of antiquity, seem to have cultivated the arts in the same spirit as their modern representatives in the Netherlands. These intagli exhibit their love of the strange and mystic: among these designs are to be noticed, a lion-headed man; a winged lion; the head of a nondescript beast with one long horn; a sphinx; a triplet of a lion and two human heads conjoined in one; three faces, the centre full, the outside in profile, with pointed beards, like the combined masks, afterwards such favourites with the Romans (this last of excellent work, but unfortunately imperfect); animals very fairly executed, especially the ibex;

\* Which contains *no hieroglyphics*; clear proof of its being a borrowed, meaningless ornament.

† The "Cabiri," and Hephæstos at Memphis were figured alike, both sons and sire—their temples adjoining each other. The same squat figure often occurs on the cylinders, perhaps marking them for really Phœnician work. Such are now termed figures of Hercules Gigon. Cambyses *burnt* these Cabiri, they must therefore have been wooden figures.



and the masterpiece of the whole lot, an Antelope pulled down by a Lion, (a common type on Phœnician coins) which for drawing and careful execution equals the best of the older Greek. A kneeling figure, bearing a short wand and holding out a lotus-flower, well engraved, is remarkable as being surrounded by a carefully finished guilloche border. But as similar borders are to be seen on the Babylonian cylinders, this adjunct by no means proves this particular intaglio Etruscan,\* but only adds another testimony to the Asiatic origin of the arts amongst the latter. But the most frequent border is a mere simple line, as upon the scarabeoids of Greece proper. The kneeling figure is a frequent subject in the list. Two fishes, their heads meeting at an angle within a circle, hovering over the well-known hieroglyphic for the ocean waves, furnishes the earliest representation of the sign Pisces† that has come to my knowledge: their influence rendering them the aptest signet that could be chosen by the merchant pirate. This also has a guilloche border, but unskilfully done. A Neptune throwing his trident, an intaglio cut in a totally diverse style, is evidently copied from the coin of Posidonia.

Then come several with rough imitations (or if antique, the true originals) of types common on the *Italiote* scarabei Hercules holding a lion in each hand by the tail; the same god advancing to the combat; a warrior charging with spear and shield; Apollo resting his hand on his lyre placed on the ground. But some of the latter appeared to me, upon careful examination, to be of the most suspicious character, and in all probability assignable to the fraudulent ingenuity of their pretended discoverer.‡ In certain cases, a diminution in their

\* Some of the unmistakable Phœnician designs were inclosed within an "Etruscan border," but usually of the simplest kind.

† The Merman, Dagon, is naturally repeated. He became the sea god Phorcys, son of Neptune, with the Greeks, who first led a colony of Etrusci and Tyrrheni into Sardinia. On some Etruscan gems he appears with arms and legs terminating in bodies of fish.

‡ Many of the scarabei had evidently been recently set in gold or in silver, passed off as discovered in such mountings. In some cases the shanks were actually composed of the oxide of metals mixed with gum water, and moulded into shape.

depth seemed to betray a recourse to the trick of rubbing down the base of the beetle-stone to remove the simple and rude original type, and afford a field for a novel design, neatly scratched in with the graver, according to Barbetti's own directions, thus to render the scarabeus more valuable to collectors. In fact, the polish of the field appeared quite recent, and was devoid of that fatty lustre so remarkable in the true Phœnician works in the same collection. Nothing could be more facile than such "improvements," or more readily performed by any copper-plate engraver; the more so that, except in the case of Neptune, rudeness of drawing had rather been aimed at than the contrary. It is for this reason that the softness of the stone was particularly pointed out by me in commencing this chapter, for it allowed such additions to be made with a graver, which would probably never have been thought of had its hardness required the application of the wheel. It is, on the other hand, a curious fact that the genuine Phœnician work in this soft stone had unmistakably been executed by the same implements, drill and corundum-point, as the intagli of the same period in the hardest gems; and another singularity was its retention of the polish through so many ages, which often have destroyed that on the carnelian and calcedony.

This collection, therefore, despite the damage done to its credit by the stupid and fraudulent attempts of its exhibitor to enhance its value, read to the understanding archæologist several very important lessons. This companionship in death, manifesting so plainly the close and long enduring connection subsisting between the "merchants of Tyrus" and the Tyrrheni, whether of Asia or of Italy, offers the most satisfactory explanation of any yet proposed as to the introduction and general adoption of the beetle-signet amongst the latter wealthy and ornament-loving race. The pattern imported along with itself, its fanciful Oriental deities, its symbolic monsters, its lions and beasts of chase, all enclosed in the peculiar framework of a craft skilled to "engrave gravings," but not to *invest*, whose notions of art had their true source in the great schools of Memphis and of Babylon.

Before quitting Etruscan glyptics, our attention is strongly claimed



by a class of works partially falling under that head; but which, from the nature of the devices they bear, throw more light upon the *provenance* of this enigmatical race, than any other memorials they have left behind them. These are their rings in hollow gold, of which the rifled sepulchres have of late years yielded up a very considerable store—a peculiarly national ornament, and found nowhere except within the ancient limits of the Tyrrhene confederation. Their bearing upon the great historical problem may be perceived upon the slightest study of their form (which is unvaried, however different the size) and the subjects they present. The face of the ring is a long ellipse (*cartouche*) with narrow flat sides, sometimes covered with fairy-like patterns in filigree, from which the back bevels gracefully off, and is soldered upon a slender shank of plain cylindrical shape, usually hollow. These rings were not *signet*, but merely ornamental, the designs upon them being either in low relief in repoussé-work, or else slightly engraved in *line*, exactly like the *graffiti* decorating the mirror backs. Many of the latter are touched in with all the delicacy of the finest etching on copper-plate; and a simple milled border is the invariable finish.

The peculiar character of these designs will be best understood from a transcript of the descriptions of the very complete series published in the 'Impronte Gemmarie' (Cent. i. and iii.), several of which will be found repeated in different specimens in other collections,\* with very slight variations. No. 57, a monstrous lion's head, whence gushes a fountain into a basin supported upon legs, before which stand two women in long Babylonish robes, with a child in front, in the act of adoration. In the centre is a palm-tree, in the field, two stars. No. 58, Charioteer driving a sphinx and horse yoked together: a Syren offers him a flower. No. 59, Charioteer driving a pair of winged horses. No. 60, Charioteer upset by a similar couple. No. 61, Charioteer driving two horses encountered by a huge swan. No. 62, Charioteer urging his pair to full speed,

\* Some of the finest known to me are to be seen in the Jewel room, British Museum.

pursued by a hare. No. 58, Man in a conical cap and long Oriental dress, holding in one hand a victim, in the other a lustral bough, in relief. No. 59, Winged figure combating a panther and a sphinx: in relief. No. 60, Sphinx and lion, in relief. No. 61, Chimera holding out an olive-branch to a sphinx. No. 62, The winged orb (*Mir*) above, in the middle a sphinx, below, a sea-horse; in three compartments, and of the finest work.

Now it will be remarked that these so wondrously mystic subjects have just as little of a Grecian as of an Egyptian character in them. Neither are they Phœnician (for some have ridiculously supposed them trinkets imported by those traders), for the precise character of Tyrian imagery is exactly ascertained from the discoveries at Tharros, already passed in review. But they are as decidedly Assyrian or Persian; the strange monsters, the costumes of the figures, are unmistakably Persepolitan. Müller in one place ascribes the appearance of similar fancies in Greece to an attempt at copying the figures in the tapestry (*Babylonica*) imported from the East; but as such commerce must have become more lively the more the Etruscans grew in power and opulence, how is it that such devices belong only to their earliest times? Their character is identical in many respects with the earliest vase paintings; we are obliged, therefore, to consider these rings as belonging to the original colonists from Asia, as yet unacquainted with the art of engraving in gems, and before they had begun to acquire any taste for Greek culture from their predecessors, the Pelasgic settlers in Umbria and Campania. Enthusiastic imitators as they were of Greek art as soon as circumstances permitted their obtaining any tincture of it, had these graffiti been contemporary with their scarabei, they would equally have displayed the figures of the heroes of the Epic Cycle. Or if made for more prosaic owners, they would have borne the animals of Nature delineated with the same correctness: whereas it may safely be said that not one *graffito* device has yet been discovered that is not of a mystic character. And in this respect again they have the strongest analogy in their nature to all the glyptic monuments of Assyrian origin.





PHENICIAN INTAGLI.

THERE exists a somewhat numerous class of intagli, for the most part in calcedony, that seem to form the connecting link between the Assyrian cone and the Grecian ring stone. In figure they are elliptical disks, somewhat convex on the back, and having the device engraved upon the plane face, after the manner of the scarabeus. Of the latter pattern, indeed, this may have been a modification, invented by a people to whom that insect form did not so strongly recommend itself, by its religious import, as to the Egyptians and Etruscans. Hence comes the expressive French denomination for them of "*Scarabéoides*," which may be accepted in English as the best possible name for the class. Being perforated through the longer axis with a wider bore than the scarabei, they must have been worn upon a cord, either round the neck, or wrist, like the cylinders and conical seals of the Assyrian neighbours of their makers; at least, none have come under my notice that retain any vestige of a swivel setting in metal.

The intagli upon them betray, both in the choice of the subjects and in the *technique* of their cutting, the influence of Assyrian art. They represent for the most part, lions, antelopes, Persepolitan monsters, and sphinxes. Of the last mystic beast a singular variety presents itself—the andro-sphinx, with the tail of a scorpion, to be

found also on the cylinders. Sometimes, but more rarely, the gods of Babylon \* or of Egypt furnish the subject.

The cutting of the intaglio is shallow, flat within, and wrought out with much care, in the stiff manner displaying all the character of the earlier epochs of the art, and in fact, identical with that of the finer Perso-Babylonian works. Fortunately, we are not left in doubt as to the nationality of these interesting relics, for several bear legends in well-cut Phœnician letters, usually expressing the owner's name, but sometimes an invocation to the deity whose image appears upon them. To cite a few examples—one of large size in red and white agate (Praun), bears the word  $\text{O W N } \gg \text{J}^\dagger$  above a roaring lion passant; in the exergue, a beetle with expanded wings. No. 1050 (Paris) has the *Mir*, the Persian emblem of the Deity, having over it the name "Sasrael" in the same characters. No. 1051 bears that favourite Punic type, the horse and palm-branch; reverse, the *Ferouer* or genius, with the title "Thot."‡ No. 1054, an example of much importance, bears the sun, crescent, and globe, above a legend which has been translated "To the great Baal;" underneath, two wild goats' heads facing each other. No. 1057 has a mitred deity in a long tunic open above the right knee, with a legend in *Cypriote* letters (a modification of the cuneiform). No. 1064 gives the name "Anza" over a deity who holds in each hand an inverted lion by the tail; in the exergue, a basket. Dr. Reichart lately showed me a calcedony engraved with the common Persian device of two genii bearing up Ormuzd above the sun and moon conjoined; but very interesting for the inscription on the reverse in large Punic letters, "Lo achamat Ashtaroth"—"To *Ashtaroth* the Comforter," who clearly here ex-

\* The finest of Phœnician signets, the scarabeus (British Museum) found at Gaza, presents the well known type of Belus combating the lion. It is mounted in a gold swivel, with ibex heads at each point of the shank, in the precise style of many found at Tharros.

† Ashanël, a proper name, explained by Lévy as "God gives strength;" by De Vogué as "The wrath of God."

‡ Very characteristic, this, of the syncretistic religion of the nation, the applying the Egyptian name (Mercury) to the peculiarly Persian image of the god.



presses the same idea as the Gnostic *Venus* on the later talismans.\* The Webb Collection contained one of the best works in this style known to me, a remarkable instance of the prevalence of Egyptian taste in Phœnicia. The type was a female with long dishevelled hair (like the head on the coins of Melita) adoring a terminal figure of Osiris, a priest standing in the background.

The great abundance of gems thus shaped, or slightly modified into ovals and rhomboids, manifests how extensively popular it was amongst the Phœnicians and their distant colonies. There is the best reason to believe it was through them this fashion of the signet was diffused amongst the Greeks of the Asiatic coast and the islands, to whom their style makes us assign many scarabeoids—the *lion* upon them, that favourite device bearing an unmistakable family likeness to those sculptured on the Lycian monuments.

The Carthaginians long maintained the use of such signets, the legacy of their Phœnician forefathers; and many calcedonies thus fashioned are now brought from the north of Africa, the parts anciently the sites of the minor towns of their republic. Fontana of Trieste had a considerable collection of them, all picked up in that locality. Of such as have fallen under my own notice, one bore a truly national type, the fore-quarters of two horses conjoined; another, a whimsical figure, but appropriate enough to the native land of the Pygmies, a crane acting as archer, holding the bow with her beak.

Certain learned men, but no archæologists, have denied that the wearing of signet rings on the finger was in use at Carthage, even in her latest times, basing this notion upon the joke of Plautus (*Pseudol.* V. ii. 20).

"They have, I think, no fingers to their hands.

Why so? Because they go with rings in th' ears."

But the first remark of Milphio's is merely made for a peg whereupon

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\* He possessed another striking exemplification of the fondness of the race for adopting the works of earlier times, a large sard with a grand Greek intaglio of an eagle tearing a hare; on the reverse some Carthaginian had engraved in a stiff, late style, his patroness Astarte enthroned.

to hang his joke, anent the ear-rings of the African strangers—an ornament in *men* ever regarded by the Romans as a ridiculous badge of barbarian birth. But beyond all doubt the Carthaginians, like their rival neighbours of Cyrene, had a profusion of engraved gems wherewith to decorate the hands of their wealthy senators. The nature of their pursuits, besides hereditary predisposition to such luxury, makes it certain that the same taste flourished amongst them as did ages later amongst their exact counterparts, the merchant princes of Genoa and Venice. In the times of Theophrastus, the Carthaginians were the great gem dealers of the world: the trade of the lapidary, therefore, if not of the glyptic artist, must have flourished amongst them. But there unhappily survives no test for distinguishing the works of a school fraught with so many interesting reminiscences, for its style would not be diverse from that of the finest Greek of the day; witness the elegance of the national gold staters, and of the tetradrachms struck by Carthaginians in Sicilian towns, like Panormus, under their domination. Such, too, is the conclusion to be deduced from the fine portraits assigned to Hanno and to Hannibal, in virtue of the Punic letters in the field, although, alas! sober criticism fails to extract such an invaluable certificate of personality from the *three* characters of the one, the *five* of the other gem. The head deemed Hannibal's is bearded, shown in three-quarters face, and covered with a helmet, a grand work in the perfect Greek style, and of a type of countenance befitting the greatest general of the ancient world. The original is at Florence, but the assumed importance of the subject is somewhat supported by the many *antique* repetitions of the same work yet extant, some without the legend. Caylus gives (Rec. ii. Pl. 46) from his own cabinet, another in profile, with the Punic characters, and in that unusual material, turquoise. The Romans of the Empire had the best authority for the portrait of their celebrated enemy, for no less than *three* statues of Hannibal were to be seen at Rome in the days of Pliny, and were objects of curiosity (as his expression "*visuntur*" denotes) to his contemporaries. The Emperor Severus, says Tzetzes, quoting some lost historian, was proud of his



descent from the Carthaginian general, and erected fresh statues to his memory; a circumstance quite sufficient to have renewed his portraits in the signet gems of the courtiers of the learned African; and by a strange, perhaps intentional coincidence, the only bust of Hannibal known to Visconti might very well pass for that of his imperial descendant, to whose command it probably owes its origin.

There exists, however, a portrait on calcedony in the Barbarini Cabinet, full of character, and as two Punic letters in the field denote, commemorative of some illustrious Carthaginian warrior. The helmet is elaborately enriched with a chasing of Victory in her car on the head-piece, of a sea-horse on the frontlet; in the field behind stands Venus at full length, robing herself. The goddess is certainly introduced as a speaking type serving to make known to the world the hero represented. A plausible conjecture may therefore be drawn from it that we behold in the likeness the gallant Hamilcar Barca, who defended Eryx, the well-beloved of the goddess, for three years against all the attacks of the Romans in the first Punic War.\* Since the time of Leon Agostini this head, numerous copies of which are in circulation, has passed for that of Massanissa, without the slightest foundation, except what he assigns, the association of the figure of Venus with the circumstance of the noted amorousness of the Numidian race. It is, however, a palpable absurdity to suppose so magnificent a work of art due to the patronage of a barbarian chief who did not even possess a coinage of his own. But which of her great men was more likely to be thus immortalised at Carthage than the father of Hannibal, famed not more for his defence of Sicily than for his subsequent reduction of Spain?

We meet with no other intagli that can with any certainty be referred to African art before the time of Juba, the ally of Cato the younger, whose truculent *effigies*, in his big Carthaginian peruke, having much of the old *Faunus* in its expression, seems to have been

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\* This interpretation is supported by the introduction upon the portraits (on the denarii) of Marcellus, of the *Triquetra*, to set forth his chief claim to renown, the conquest of Sicily.

largely multiplied at the epoch of the Civil War, doubtless owing to his warm support of Pompey's interests.\* Of his learned son Juba II. (whose treatise on precious stones Pliny continually refers to), an admirable gem portrait is preserved, fully equal in style to those of his patron, Augustus, and incidentally proving that he also had become imbued with the fashionable taste of the age, and bestowed a discriminating patronage upon some eminent practitioner of the glyptic art. (Blacas Cabinet.)

This art continued to be cultivated in the same region until late under the Empire, but rapidly sank into a sad decadence. A convincing proof of this lies in the large number of intagli representing Astarte,† Venus, Cœlestis, the tutelary goddess of New Carthage, enthroned upon her lion, none of which make any pretensions to fine work. This being so with a subject which naturally would command the best skill there available, a sure criterion is afforded of the feeble status of gem engraving within the limits of the ancient Punic dominions.

\* —“horrentes effingens crine galeros,” as Silius hath it of one of his Punic heroes.

† Regarded by some as the same deity as Juno. This explains the name “Junonia,” given by Tib. Gracchus to the city when he commenced its restoration.







## KÖHLER'S CLASSIFICATION OF ETRUSCAN SCARABEI.

THIS sagacious, but too fanciful archaeologist, has treated at great length, upon the respective periods of the different classes of Etruscan scarabei, passing in review, with much exactness, all the principal examples then known (in his 'Abhandlung über Käfer-gemmen und Etruskische Kunst.') Although his theory appears to me to rest on no sure grounds, and besides, is totally opposed to the views of Winckelmann upon this head, yet it deserves to be given here in a summary, both on account of the real information it contains, and because it has come to be generally adopted for their guide by all the antiquaries of the Continent. He divides scarabei into three periods.

"The *First Period* embraces such works as are both good in the drawing, and executed with the greatest nicety. Inscriptions giving the names of the personages represented distinguish most of this class. They are invariably made out of the finest and choicest Oriental stones, sards and sardonyx.\* Upon the execution of the *beetle* itself, which is in almost full relief, the greatest diligence has been expended;

\* Which latter material being always cut transversely, is now commonly, though incorrectly, known as the banded, or tri-coloured agate.

and every portion, the head, the body, the sides, the wing-cases (which last are sometimes adorned with simple yet elegant ornaments subsequently added), and the feet, together with the base supporting them, and running round the entire beetle, have all been treated with a nicety that cannot be surpassed. With equal perfection and industry have the figures of the heroes, with the accompanying inscriptions, been executed upon the flat base of the beetle. The correct drawing in these figures, the exact knowledge of the nude displayed in them, oblige us to recognise in the Etruscans a nation that had made great progress in art, and had reached the limit of perfection in the treatment of gem work. Their drawing of the nude is scientific and distinct, except that the bones and muscles are somewhat more strongly defined than either necessity, or the law of the imitation of form and beauty, demands, because actual life never makes these parts stand out so conspicuously. The field is inclosed within a border, which, in the best examples, is wrought with extraordinary elegance and precision, and after a different pattern in almost every different gem. In some few, the empty space of the exergue is filled in with fine cross lines,\* or else with strokes interwoven in a very graceful manner.

"In this class besides the works of the excellent masters just described, others present themselves of inferior merit; although it is impossible to decide which of the two are of earlier or later origin. Besides this, the taste in which the subjects are designed varies so widely in different examples, though all belonging to the same period, that the strongly distinctive marks which Lanzi assigns to his 'Second Period' cannot be applied, as a general rule, to the scarabæi of the First. For example, the shortness of the bodies, and the disproportionate bigness of the heads to be remarked in the 'Five Heroes,' can scarcely be found in a single other gem of the First and Second Periods: on the contrary, the figure of the well-known 'Tydeus' runs into the opposite extreme. The constrained attitudes censured in the 'Tydeus' and in the 'Peleus Laving his Hair,' characterize,

\* A conventional manner of representing a grassy foreground. Something of the kind may be seen on some Egyptian scarabæi.



it is true, all the productions of the First Period. The want of a distinct and fine expression in the *heads*, marks the figures upon all these scarabei, a point in which they agree with the works of the Archaic-Greek school of sculpture, in all the monuments of it that remain to us. The subjects represented on both these classes are, with very rare exceptions, the heroes of the Theban and Trojan Wars. A noteworthy fact is that we never see upon such gems the *deities with wings*, of which the Greeks were so liberal at the date of the commencement of their Olympiads, as we find from the description of the Coffin of Cypselus.\* But their omission is probably due to the circumstance that heroes only, not divinities, were portrayed upon these scarabei. Now as the Greeks never† employed this form of the signet, so much the more astonishing is the appearance of Grecian heroes upon the scarabeus, a shape borrowed from the Egyptians; for as Ælian remarks, the beetle-signet was in Egypt the distinctive badge of the military caste, probably being worn as an amulet against danger. The Etruscans, therefore, may have imported from Egypt this notion, together with the fashion of the gem; and thus, as Lanzi has conjectured, this ornament may have been appropriated to the military class amongst them also, which would account for the evident restriction of the designs to heroic imagery. The scarabei of the First Period are infinitely rarer and more valuable than those of the other two. Their epoch commences some considerable time after the arrival of the much-talked-of Corinthian colony at Tarquinii, B.C. 640, and continues down to the time of Phidias, or B.C. 460.

"Of the *Second Period*, the scarabei at the very first sight betray their more recent origin. Whilst in the works of the First, the bones

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\* An unfounded assertion. Artemis alone was so represented, and thereby excited the surprise of Pausanias. Pythagoras forbade his followers to have figures of the deities in their signets (for fear of profanation), which shows plainly that the wearing signets with such types had previously been the fashion; and this legislator of Southern Italy flourished somewhere between B.C. 608 and 500.

† A too sweeping assertion. Some six or seven scarabei, with indubitably pure Greek legends, always the owner's name, are now known (noticed p. 145). They however, belong to the Greeks of Asia and the Isles, and therefore to a Pelagic stock.

and the muscles are too carefully made out, the bodies also slender and without fulness, and consequently too often harsh and constrained, the intagli of the Second Period are distinguished by a display of plumpness and of strength, by a greater corpulence, by a multiplicity of details, by attitudes rarely violent, but effective through their manifestation of energy and force, or else of softness and elasticity. It is easily discoverable that the artists were here labouring to avoid the errors of the school which had gone before. But in so doing, they strayed from the road on which their predecessors had made such important progress—the accurate intelligence of life: their drawing became incorrect, then feeble, and soon degenerated into mannerism. *It is probable that at the beginning of this period the Etruscans had become acquainted with the works in the later style of the Greeks.* This may be deduced from the subjects of many intagli of the class: one convincing example is the ‘Contest of Apollo and Hercules for the Tripod’ (Paris), an engraving which holds the first rank amongst the works of this school. Very few indeed of the class offer *inscriptions*, although, as was to be expected, they regularly appear in the very numerous *modern* or retouched *forgeries* in this style, *a line in which Pichler has been very successful.\** The border now assumes its most simple form, one that is found on but very few of the preceding series. The beetle itself is finished with much less care and neatness. The scarabei are cut out of the common stones, whereas those of the First School were wrought in the finest Oriental species; a fact corroborating the stories of the ancients about the opulence, luxury, and far-extended commerce of the early Etruscans. But the works of the Second belong to times when their ruined commerce could supply no better material than the indigenous stones, and when the arts were fast sinking into neglect. This period extends from the age of Phidias down to B.C. 280.

“To the *Third Period* belong those scarabei which partly are

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\* A notice of great importance to the collector, coming, as it does, from a contemporary of that artist, and one who had the best facilities for learning the truth.



executed in the most careless manner, partly appear as if merely sketched out.\* The more insignificant the engraving, the more inferior is the quality of the carnelian or sard that bears it. Little as they have to recommend them on the score of workmanship, small pleasure as they can afford the amateur as monuments of taste, yet they deserve to be collected and preserved in public cabinets for the sake of the extensive diversity of designs they present, and from their bearings upon the history of art. Especial attention is due to the gems in this class that represent many deities as *winged*, whom the Greeks in all their monuments now extant represented without wings; but who, nevertheless, in their works of a very remote age (of which nothing remains but the descriptions) were similarly depicted as having wings. Equally exceptional† to the established Grecian type, are the *long-tailed Fauns*, so frequent upon this class of scarabei. Gems of this kind are exhumed in abundance around Tarentum, and in many parts of Calabria. That eminent artist, Pichler, was in the right for not considering them as the first early attempts of an art as yet unperfected and in its apprenticeship, which was the opinion held by Winckelmann and others, and even by Lanzi in the beginning. Much rather ought they to be esteemed the productions of an age coming after an expiring long-continued civilization, when all the arts had fallen into utter decrepitude. They were cut out by wholesale to supply the immense number of customers, and constitute the very latest of the works executed in the shape of the scarabeus. It is more than probable that as in Egypt, so in Etruria during all the Three Periods, these beetles were believed in as amulets protecting against all mishap; and that in addition to this virtue, the gods, genii, heroes, engraved upon them, were regarded as the guardian deities of the wearers.

"The Countess di Lipona (the Queen-Dowager of Spain) had formed an enormous collection of these later scarabei, partly by single pur-

\* Meaning the figures entirely made out by the juxtaposition of drill holes.

† Yet they are, of all subjects, the most common in the Archaic vase paintings, much of which came direct from Athens and Corinth.

chases, partly through the acquisition of entire suites of them formed by the Cav. Carelli and other antiquaries. Since then Carelli has recommenced a fresh collection, which I have examined, as well as the Countess Lipona's, now deposited in her palace at Vienna; and in both cabinets I have found many good pieces it is true, but not a single one that distinguished itself in the least degree by the singularity of its subject from the innumerable other productions of the same epoch already known. One of the scarabei of unusual dimensions, such as sometimes are met with in this class alone, seen by myself at Naples, gave the name of the Achilles figured upon it as "Peleides" in an abbreviated form; and I laboured to no purpose to convince its owner of the necessary spuriousness of such an inscription.

"In this class also the designs are inclosed within a border, which in the better specimens is finished with some degree of care; but in the commoner, in the clumsiest manner imaginable. This period extends from B. C. 280, down to the times of Julius Cæsar."

It would not be fair to the reader for me to dismiss this subject without adducing a few of the insuperable objections to the above ingenious classification that must force themselves upon the mind of every intelligent student of Etruscan art. In the first place comes the mechanical execution of the intagli upon the scarabei of Köhler's "latest class," agreeing closely with that of Assyrian work, confessedly the earliest of all, but which is never to be detected in gems of pure Greek or Roman times. Had these very peculiar intagli been manufactured so largely as that critic maintains, nay, in ever-increasing numbers, even to the very last age of the Roman Republic, we certainly should find *Roman* intagli of the same date exhibiting a corresponding style of art. And, conversely, portraits were the branch of the glyptic art most diligently cultivated by the Romans as early as the time of Scipio the Elder. How is it then, that even the rudest attempt at a head upon any *Etruscan* scarabeus is a thing hardly ever to be met with? It is ascertained that the Greeks did not essay their skill in likenesses

\* The Blacas diademed head, in a very old style, is probably Hellenic; the Castellani Pallas manifestly so, reminding one strongly of the type of Thurii.



from the life upon gems much before Alexander's times, a fact affording good data for assuming the high antiquity of the scarabei of every class. Again, the *winged* deities are allowed by Köhler himself to mark the primitive stage of Grecian art; why not, by a parity of reasoning, that of Etruscan? Such appendages were in both cases relics of older Asiatic symbolism. The vastly preponderating number in his "Third Period" appears to attest rather the *opulence* than the *decadence* of the people using them; wealth must have been generally diffused whenever the lower classes were accustomed to buy signets. That these particular scarabei are not the production of an effete art, is fully manifested by the excellent execution of the beetle, often done with marvellous skill and truth to nature, in cases where the intaglio looks like the most ludicrous essay of a 'prentice hand. Again, these artless engravings have generally been honoured with the most costly settings to be seen in the whole series; and, moreover, in spite of Köhler's dictum, are as frequently in the finest Indian sards and banded agates as the most artistic engravings of any period. Their greater plentifulness in Southern Italy than in Tuscany, of itself bespeaks their early date, for the Etruscans were driven by the Samnites out of Campania as far back as B.C. 439. These ruder intagli, with their Fauns, Chimerae, Cerberi, Pegasi, bear no resemblance to the pure Greek subjects and style decorating the vases (more graceful ever as they approach decadence) of that same province, which were, for the most part, made after this expulsion of the Etruscans. Had both manufactures been carried on at the same time, in the same locality, they would have coincided, however rude the engraving, in these two particulars. Besides, it is unreasonable to suppose that people with eyes accustomed to the perfect forms (and rendered more fastidious by long prevailing luxury) of their vase paintings and their coinage, could have endured such pitiable attempts at drawing as disfigure these scarabei; especially when we remember that the signet was of infinitely more importance and interest to the ancients than any other production of cultivated skill.\* The

\* See the quotation from 'Ecclesiasticus' at p. 103.

analogy of the Egyptian scarabei declares how rapidly the clumsy national style was superseded by a neater manner after the Greek conquerors had given the needful lessons to the native artists. The common quality of the stones remarked by Köhler, does not apply universally to his "Third Period," for I have noticed, as already remarked, very rude intaglio work upon scarabei of the finest Indian sard and garnet. But in such, the beetle itself, evidently considered as the all-important part, was most elaborately worked. Poverty of material (granted that it did exist in this case) would indicate a nation without commerce, and forced to content itself with the carnelians and calcedonies of their own river-beds and sea-coasts. The wealth of Campania and the luxury of the inhabitants, lasting through the ages of the Commonwealth far into the Empire, are things too notorious to require more than a passing notice here.

But in reality, we observe the Etruscan *sculptures* in marble and alabaster, notably in the bas-reliefs on the sarcophagi, assimilating themselves more and more to the then prevailing Greek style, instead of receding further from it, and reverting to the most archaic types of religious symbolism, as Köhler would have us to believe. The bad drawing characterising these intagli is like their clumsy execution, not attributable to carelessness in the engraver, but to want of skill in *intaglio* cutting, and want of efficient tools for giving the finish of more advanced art; for observation shows the unusually large scarabei bearing them are often both of the best material and execution, whilst their settings, on which the Etruscan goldsmith has lavished his utmost skill, convincingly demonstrate that in their own time they were regarded as the *chef d'œuvres* of the engraver, who practised his art according to the traditions of his craft, brought with him from the East, long before he became acquainted with the improvements struck out by Grecian sagacity.

The elegant borders inclosing such subjects as were drawn from *Grecian* mythology, the heroes of Theban and of Trojan story, are identical with those surrounding the perfectly executed primitive coins of Siris, Sybaris, Metapontum, and Crotona. Besides this



adjunct, the peculiar flat relief of their types of gods or animals, to say nothing of the identity of the drawing, manifests that the dies were sunk by the very engravers who executed the fine intagli of Köhler's "First Period;" which therefore, in conformity to such irrefragable evidence, ought rather to be denominated the "Second," or perhaps with more justice, the "Italiote."\*

\* The only objection to this attribution lies in the *Etruscan* legends found on many of the finest works. An obvious solution, however, is to suppose that Italiote engravers worked for the Etruscan market (the notorious opulence of that people supplying a sufficient reason), and therefore explained their subjects in a language intelligible to their best customers.





ETRUSCAN ART.

THERE is no one question of archæology upon which so many conflicting theories have been advanced by the learned of our times, as upon the true nationality of the Etruscans, their relationship to the aborigines of Central Italy, and as a necessary sequence, the origin of the creative art they cultivated so long and so zealously in that region. Without doing more than refer to these modern fabrics, which are for the most part based, not upon archæological data, derived from the careful study of existing remains of this enigmatical race, but upon unsubstantial premises, and constructed in support of certain preconceived notions, it appears to me an infinitely more satisfactory method of investigating the subject, to collect into one view all that the ancients have expressly related concerning it when they were treating of the primitive history and migration of a people still flourishing in the ages when they wrote: the historians, it also should be remembered, being only removed by comparatively few generations from the events they were recording. There is another very important consideration, as affecting the credibility of their statements, though strangely enough entirely neglected by modern investigators of Etruscan history—this very people was, next to the Egyptians, the most *monumental* of all antiquity; they having actually left to us a



larger number of memorials in the shape of inscriptions, dating all from before our era, than both the Greeks and the Romans put together for the same period. The present plentifulness of such memorials, in the enduring materials of stone and metal, logically warrants the presumption of the former existence, to the proportionate and largely multiplied extent, of similar records in the transitory media of papyri, birch-bark, parchments, and that specially Etruscan book-material, the linen rolls, "*libri lintei*." Mæcenas and Claudius had doubtless an ample store of contemporary documents to refer to for the genealogy of their families—the chronicles of the "*reges atavi*" of the former;\* or to serve for foundation to the *Tupprvikà*, 'Etruscan History,' compiled by the imperial pedant in twenty books: which last, had it been preserved, this question of antiquity would doubtless have been as clear as it is now obscure.† The author, to give the world the benefit of his researches, founded at the "Museum" (University) of Alexandria, a new lectureship for the reading of this work, and of his 'Carthaginian History' (in eight books), on alternate years. (Suet. Claud. 41.) It may, however, be taken for granted that the lectureship, intended to perpetuate the labours of the learned emperor, did not long survive the accession of his very undutiful adoptive son, who with his courtiers lost no opportunity of ridiculing the memory of his departed uncle.

And here a question naturally arises: were these antiquaries of the first century capable of reading the Etruscan‡ records in the original,

\* The lineal descendant of Elbius, Incunon of Volterra, who fell in the great battle of the Vadimon, A.U.C. 445.

† The value of his authorities is evinced by an extract in his oration ('*Tal. Lugdun.*'), which, for the idle Latin legend making Ser. Tullius the son of Ocrisia and the Fire-god, gives the Etruscan account of his origin—Mastarna, a follower of some ruined Etruscan prince, Coles Vibenna (who, with the wreck of his army, was permitted to settle on one of the Seven Hills), by his politic conduct obtaining his election for Roman king, after changing his name to Ser. Tullius. The memory of the new settlers was preserved, says Tacitus in the '*Vicus Tuscus*,' the "traders' street" of Rome.

‡ Artemidorus *Sandon* (a true Lydian by his name) had dedicated a book to Octavia, which, as it is quoted by Plutarch ('*Publicola*') *apropos* of the story of Porsenna and Mutius Scaevola, must have been a history of those times, and, as his

or were they reduced to depend entirely on second-hand authorities like the Sicilian Timæus,\* who flourished about two centuries and a half before their time; and Theopompus of Chios, who preceded him again by a hundred years, from whom Athenæus (xii. 14) extracts certain very scandalous stories as to the national mode of living.† When did the Etruscan cease to be a spoken tongue? In the tomb of the Volumni, Perugia, the last of the line bears upon his sarcophagus a Latin translation of the Etruscan epitaph, in characters apparently of Augustan date. About a hundred and fifty years later, A. Gellius mentioning the instance of a certain orator who, in his over fondness for antiquated words, spoke of “apluda” and “flores” (black bread, small wine), remarks that the audience stared at him “as though he were talking Gaulish or Etruscan.” This would lead one to infer that it was still as possible for the latter tongue to be spoken as for the former, and that both were equally inharmonious to the Latin ear. Later still, Julian carried Etruscan *aruspices*‡ with him in his Persian campaign, and in the very last days of the empire, Zosimus mentions the same class as driving off Alaric from the siege of Nepi by means of thunderstorms, raised by their long-famous, hereditary art. These conjura-

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version of the fact differs from the current Roman, evidently derived from Etruscan sources.

\* Who must have gone into minute details on the affairs of the Peninsula, since Pliny quotes him as to the fact that the Romans instead of coin used copper ingots, *as rude*, before Servius Tullius' reign.

† Which, however, attest the minuteness with which he had treated upon the history of the people. Much, also, would have been explained by the still earlier Philistus, admiral of Dionysius the Tyrant, whom Cicero lauds as a “*pusillus Thucydides*,” for he wrote his ‘Sicilian History’ when in exile at Hadria on the Po, in his time an important Etruscan city. This work must from the beginning have been in high esteem, since it was forwarded, together with the Attic tragedies and dithyrambists, by Harpulus to Alexander when in Asia, who had written to him for a supply of “standard works.”

‡ “Etrusci tamen aruspices qui comitabantur, gnari prodigialium rerum, cum illis precinctum hunc sæpe arcantibus non crederetur, *prolati libris* exercitualibus ostendebant signum hoc esse prohibitorium, principique aliena, licet juste invadenti, contrarium: sed calcabantur *philosophis refragantibus* quorum reverenda tunc erat autoritas,” &c. (xxiii. 5, 10.) This disputed omen was the present to Julian of a monstrous lion, slain by some hunters near the Mausoleum of Gordian at Dara.



tions, evoking the Prince of the powers of the air, the awful Jupiter Elicius (the unhallowed use whereof had proved fatal to Tullus Hostilius of old), must, as the universal rule of such things demands, have continued to be couched in the language of their ancestors, the great masters of the science.

So much for the anterior probability of the existence of copious stores of Etruscan records in the Augustan age, and of their availability to the enquirers of that period. Their respectability and value may, on the most sufficient grounds, be taken for granted. Five or six hundred years count for little in impugning the credit of the traditions preserved by a mighty, and for the greater part of its independent existence, a highly civilized nation. This hereditary history common sense itself points out as being (without other confirmation, though that too is abundantly forthcoming) of a more satisfactory character than the smoke-begotten theories of modern German sciologists. Diodorus Siculus (v. 40) incidentally alludes to the great extent to which the Etruscans had carried the cultivation of "letters,"\* of Natural Sciences, and of Theology; terms by which he clearly meant the same branches of learning as those cultivated under these denominations by the Greeks, and according to the Grecian system; for he goes on to subjoin to these their eminence in their own *peculiar* science, divination by lightning. Their *ancient* proficiency in literature necessarily implies the existence of the monuments of that literature at the time he wrote, the age of Julius Cæsar. But at that period the nation was completely degenerate, sunk in gluttony and sloth, a change ascribed by the historian to their custom of eating two dinners every day: the very cause assigned by an experienced physician for the debility of body and mind so widely prevalent amongst the opulent classes of modern English society.†

\* *Γράμματα* exactly answers to our "polite literature," necessarily at the time signifying the Greek, for no other then existed. The study of Greek in Etruria is amusingly immortalized by the existence of the terra-cotta primer, with the alphabets of the two languages, "for the use of schools."

† The Second Punic War must have consummated their ruin, for Tib. Gracchus found the fields of Etruria entirely cultivated by barbarian slaves; and in the following

The ancient love of the Etruscans for Greek culture is strikingly manifested by the decorations of those remains about whose origin no doubt whatever can arise—their mirrors and sarcophagi. Their gems have been considered elsewhere; and, besides, from various circumstances, do not admit of so strict a Tyrrhene appropriation.\* But the mirror-*graffiti*, or incised designs, the sepulchral bas-reliefs, represent with hardly an exception scenes taken from the Epic Cycle, and portrayed with much intelligence of their meaning as well as with great spirit and refined taste; all displaying a perfect acquaintance with Grecian story, though explained to the commonalty by inscriptions in the national tongue, in which the repugnant genius of the two languages is strikingly apparent in the strangely distorted forms the heroic names are forced to assume. These engravings and bas-reliefs alone suffice to explain what Diodorus meant by the cultivation of literature and theology amongst the people who made them.

Those national traditions, from considering which the remark of the Sicilian historian has caused us to digress, though they have come down to us in very meagre remnants, still throw much light, when they are judiciously analysed, upon many points, at first sight hopelessly inscrutable, in the character of Etruscan art. The first of these problems is the unmistakable influence of Asiatic ideas upon much of its productions, especially those that style and execution oblige us to refer to the earliest ages of the newly established nationality. The second is the equally manifest, but far more extensive operation of Grecian taste and beliefs, upon a second series of Etruscan works of much higher aspirations to artistic excellence. To state the question briefly, whence is it that we find many Etruscan works representing four-winged deities, gryphons, sphinxes, symbolical monsters, and other mystic forms, unavoidably reminding us of Assyrian imagery? Whence the marked fondness for the lion, and the ability of accurately depicting

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century all her cities were granted as allotments to Sylla's veterans. Causes, these, sufficiently accounting for the sudden and total collapse of Etruscan art.

\* Many of them undoubtedly emanating from the primitive Greek cities in their neighbourhood.



him, so little to be looked for in inhabitants of *Italy*? Why upon sculptures even of their best times, side by side with the Theban or Trojan heroes, does that mystic being obtrude himself, the *Genius* "albus et ater," that peculiarly Etruscan idea (but adopted by the Romans), and as "*naturæ dens humanæ*" exactly corresponding to the Zoroastrian *Ferouher*, the guardian angel of every person born? Or why in the midst of a scene unmistakably extracted from *Æschylus* or *Euripides*, do we view with amazement the grim aspect of the mallet-wielding *CHARUN*, the god of death? expressions of ideas not merely unknown to, but actually at variance with, the materialistic and beauty-worshipping spirit of Hellenic mythology.

This hybrid character of their art is, however, fully explained by the ancient accounts of the hybrid origin of the peoples forming the Etruscan Confederation,\* which we will now proceed to examine, beginning with the most ancient. Herodotus (i. 94), writing at no great distance of time from the event, speaks, as of a well-known historical fact, of the colonization of Umbria† by one half of the population of Lydia migrating thither in the reign of Atys, son of Manes, being hard-pressed by severe and long-continued famine. But in another chapter (57) he had spoken of the "Tyrrheni" as inhabiting Thrace in his day; and hence, in reality, was derived the name "Tyrrhenus," borne both by the Lydian prince and that division of his countrymen which followed his fortunes and settled in Umbria. These Thracian Tyrrheni were then occupying Bithynia, Phrygia, and Armenia. The same, probably (not their later brethren of Central Italy), were the Tyrrheni, who, according to the very ancient poet, Possis the Magnesians, had attacked the *Argo* at sea, and wounded every person of her crew except her builder and pilot, *Glaucus*, the sea-god; and, similarly, they may be supposed the Tyrrhene pirates who, according to Q. Curtius, were ravaging the Macedonian coast

\* Pliny gives the true solution of the problem in the single sentence, if rightly understood, "*Umbros inde exegere antiquitus Pelasgi, hos Lydi.*"

† It must be observed he gives this as the tradition of the Lydians themselves; a circumstance adding greatly to its weight.

at the very moment of Alexander's coming to the throne. Again, in his 'Hymn to Bacchus,' he makes the Tyrrhene pirate captain (who has captured the youthful god upon the coast, taking him to be some king's son) threaten to carry him off "to Egypt, or Cyprus, or the Hyperboreans, or still further," to force him to declare his parentage and means, with the view of extorting a ransom for his release. This attests the reputation the Tyrrheni had acquired thus early as fearless navigators. What turned the attention of the Asiatic population to Umbria, as a desirable country to colonize with their surplus numbers, was its recent *discovery* by their neighbours, the Phœceans of Ionia, the first of the Greeks to undertake "long voyages"—i. e., to venture into the fabulous remoteness of the Mediterranean.\*

Again, Strabo, in his description of Etruria, states that the inhabitants were called by the Greeks "Tyrrheni," after Tyrrhenus, son of Atys, a descendant of Hercules and Omphale; who, in consequence of a great dearth in Lydia, emigrated with the larger part of his subjects, and colonized that region of Italy, founding therein the twelve cities of the subsequently celebrated Confederation (Strab. v. 2). It is the natural inference, from the fact of his commencing his description of Etruria with the account of this immigration, that it was the earliest tradition of the establishment of Etruria as an Italian state that had come to his knowledge. Tacitus (iv. 55) has preserved a very remarkable instance of the implicit belief with which this tradition was received by the Romans of the first century. The city of Sardis claimed the honour of possessing the temple proposed to be raised to Augustus, on the score of national relationship; and her envoys read an ancient Etruscan decree, "*decretum Etruriæ*," to prove their claims. According to this, the two brothers, Tyrrhenus and Lydus, divided the over-great population of that part of Asia Minor between them—the former to colonise Italy; the latter, remaining at home, gave his own name to his subjects. A descendant of his,

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\* "Being the discoverers of the Adriatic, Tyrrhenia, Iberia, and Tartessus" (Her. i. 163).



Pelops, at a later period took possession of the part of Greece denominated after him—an incidental testimony, of value, as will appear hereafter, that the same race then occupied both Lydia and Phrygia—for Pelops usually figures as a Phrygian prince.

But there is another race, important everywhere in the primeval legends of Italy as well as of Greece, but which had almost vanished from the scene before regular history begins.\* These are the *Pelasgi*, whom, according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (writing under Augustus), many antiquaries then regarded as the same with the *Tyrrheni*, and therefore not in any way belonging to the Grecian family. This historian ('*Antiq.*' i.) records the immigration into Italy of *Pelasgi* under their leaders *Ænotrus* and *Peucestes*—a race which, before the supremacy of the Hellenes, had been the original possessors of most of the mainland of Greece; "their chief seat, however, being amongst the *Æolians* of *Thessaly*." They had also given their national appellation to many of the oldest divisions of that country: thus, *Thessaly* was the "*Pelagic Argos*;" *Dodona* was *Pelagic*; so were *Argos*, *Lesbos*, *Lemnos*, *Athens* herself. *Homer* found them amongst the allies of *Priam*, and occupying "the fertile *Larissa*." This capital of theirs must have been the *Larissa* in *Thrace*, founded, thinks *Heyne*, by the exiles from *Thessaly*; for the nation immediately following them in the poet's muster-roll are the *Thracians* dwelling upon the *Hellespont*. *Herodotus* (i. 57) knew the *Pelasgi*, the ancient occupants of "the land now called *Thessaly*," as then occupying *Chrestone* in *Thrace*, "to the inland side of the *Tyrrheni*;" also *Placie* and *Scylace* on the *Hellespont*, which two places they had colonised conjointly with the *Athenians*. This last circumstance proves that their claim of kindred was still allowed by their wealthy and civilised brethren; although, as the same historian remarks, the *Athenians* had exchanged their primitive "barbarous" tongue for the *Hellenic*.

The *Pelasgi* and *Tyrrheni* appear in precisely the same relations to each other on the coast of *Asia* as on that of *Italy*. *Photius* quotes *Conon's* '*Narrations*,' B. 41, how that *Cyzicus*, son of *Apollo*, king of the *Pelasgi* of *Thessaly*, had been expelled by his own subjects,

united with the Æolians, and went and founded the city called after him in Asia. When the *Argo* touched there, the townsfolk, knowing her to be a *Thessalian* bark, out of revenge upon their unkind countrymen who had banished them, attacked her in the night, and Cyzicus was killed in the tumult. Then came the Tyrrheni, and, taking advantage of their want of a leader, drove them all out of the town, which they occupied themselves. But in time they were punished by Miletus, which exterminated these usurpers, and added Cyzicus to her own dominions.

Ellis, in his recent learned disquisition "On the Armenian origin of the Etruscans," very plausibly derives the national appellation, *Pelasgi*, from two primitive roots, *pel* and *asg*, literally, "the old people," or aborigines; a name they bore in contradistinction to the newcomers, the Hellenes, who ousted them successively from all their proper seats. But the later Greeks, little adepts in ancient etymology, saw in the title a nickname given to the disinherited race on the score of their repeated migrations. They were the "storks," *πελαργοί*, of the ancient world.

Those of the Pelasgi who were the original inhabitants of Thebes, when expelled from that territory, occupied the islands of the North Ægean. Whether these Pelasgi were of the same stock as the Tyrrheni (which is not improbable), or of a different family, we often find them acting in union against the Hellenes. Their occupation of the isles just adverted to seems connected with the expulsion of the children of Euphemus, the Argonaut, from Lemnos, by "Tyrrhenian forces," referred to by Apollonius (iv. 1760) as a well-known historical fact. But these usurpers were in their turn sent a-wandering; for Aristotle, as cited by Diogenes Laertius, styles Mnesarchus, the father of Pythagoras, "a Tyrrhene by nation, being a native of one of those islands out of which the Athenians drove the Tyrrheni."\* But it was long after this date that the Pelasgi still continued to hold some important

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\* And therefore before B.C. 570, the date of his son's birth, which took place after his settlement in Samos.



islands in that sea; for one of the great services rendered to Athens by Miltiades was his driving the Pelasgi out of Lemnos. Whither they retired, Herodotus has not taken the trouble to name—probably to Thrace. As already quoted, this historian seems to consider the Athenians\* as of the Pelasgic race; yet in another passage (vi. 137) he gives a remarkable tradition preserved by his very ancient predecessor, Hecataeus, which is singularly at variance with the notion. According to this story, the Pelasgi had received from the Athenians a tract of land at the foot of Hymettus, in payment for their services in *building the wall* surrounding the Acropolis. Having by their skilful cultivation brought this land, before barren and waste, into fine condition (another proof of their superiority to the Hellenes in the arts of peace), the Athenians coveted the same, and expelled the owners, who were forced to betake themselves to Lemnos. No reason is assigned for their choosing that remote island for their refuge; so it may be naturally inferred that it suggested itself as the nearest place still possessed by their own countrymen. Another legend, told in the same sequence, as to the expelled “freemasons” sending back their galleys in revenge, to carry off the Athenian women, when engaged in a rural festival, and these women teaching the children they bore to their ravishers the *Attic* language and customs (*i. e.*, religion), equally proves that the then inhabitants of Athens were immigrants of a totally distinct origin.

Part of these Pelasgi (according to the very reasonable theory proposed by K. O. Müller in his ‘Etrusker’) united with the Lydians led by Tyrrhenus in their colonization of Italy.† As to the undeniable

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\* Plutarch (‘Cimon’) relates a tradition that they first taught the natives of Greece the use of fire, to dig wells, and to sow corn.

† Lycophron, who flourished A.D. 282, thus describes the conquest of Umbria in his own oracular style (‘Cassandra,’ l. 351):—“Again, hawks quitting Tmolus, and Cimpas, and the gold-breeding waters of Pactolus, and the liquid lake where the bride of Typhon calms the recesses of the dismal lair, have riotously entered into Ausonian Agylla, the dread of the Ligurians, and to those who draw their origin from the blood of the *Sithonian giants*. And again encountering them in battle, they have taken *Pisa*, and have subjugated all the region won by the spear, lying adjacent, the

existence of a considerable *Celtic* element in the Etruscan state and *language* (a fact which, pushed to the extreme, drove the truly Hibernian imagination of Sir W. Beetham into those prodigious hallucinations set forth in his 'Etruria Celtica'), Müller proposes an explanation, most wonderfully and convincingly confirmed by the very recent discoveries, throwing light upon the nationality of the actual primitive races of Italy, and which establish their complete identity with the Helvetic Celts of the "lake-dwellings." He makes the "Rasena" \* (the name the Etruscans always gave themselves) to be an indigenous race primarily seated on the Apennines and the plains of the Po; and thence moving southwards to the conquest of Umbria, they united for the purpose with the colonies of Pelasgi, as well as of Asiatic Tyrrheni † previously settled upon the *coast*, and reduced to serfdom the aboriginal or Umbrian Celts. Were the Rasena themselves Celts is a question which must ever continue a matter of dispute. One thing, however, is certain: that they must have been utterly barbarous as compared with their allies from Asia Minor and the Grecian islands; and this explains how the Asiatic nationality communicated its religious spirit, and became the dominant caste in the new confederation. That the genius of the Etruscan nationality, when once predominant and able to follow its natural bent, was anything but Celtic, is manifested by its love for, and susceptibility of receiving Grecian culture of every kind. The genuine Celts are incapable of learning refinement from their more advanced neighbours. The Gauls acquired neither art nor science from the juxtaposition of the long-flourishing states of Massilia and Antipolis; nor again the Britons from their Roman masters; not to cite invidious parallels from modern history, which must present themselves to every one's mind.

Whencesoever they came, these invaders found the country

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country of the Umbri and of the Salpī subject to the bitter frost." The allusion to the *Thracian* (Sithonian) stock of the aborigines is particularly valuable.

\* Out of which the Greeks made the more euphonious *Tuscani*.

† It has also been conjectured that the Tyrrheni of Thrace may have entered Italy by the way of Rætia—the road taken by the Huns a thousand years later. This explains the regular Etruscan names still borne by certain places in the Rætian Alps.



swarming with an immense Celtic population. "The Umbri are the most *ancient* people of Italy, being called 'Ombrici' by the Greeks, because they survived the *raids* of the universal deluge! The Etruscans are said to have taken no fewer than three hundred towns of theirs" (Plin. iii. 19). These Umbrians had before driven the Siculi and Liburni out of Northern Italy, from the plains of Palma and Hadria; whence they in turn were expelled by the Etruscans, who themselves lost the country to the Gauls, when it became Gallia Cisalpina. Yet the Umbri survived to the last as tributaries of the Etruscans. Before the battle of the Vadimon, Fabius sends his brother, "who could speak Tuscan," to endeavour to gain them over to the side of the Romans, but with little success. It will be noticed that all the early *Greek* (Pelasgian) settlements were upon the coast: like the Hellenes of the latest times, they never attempted inland conquest.

Of the three races of invaders, the Pelasgi had been the first to settle on the Umbrian coast. Strabo preserves a curious tradition, when describing the ancient prosperity of the city Agylla, "founded by Pelasgi from Thessaly;" and which, in memory of its origin, long maintained a treasury at Delphi—a manifesto to the world that it regarded itself as a Greek colony, and which was equivalent in modern phrase to the having shares in a National Bank of Greece. In the age of Herodotus, the Agyllæans, though now members of the Etruscan Confederation, by the command of that oracle used to celebrate gymnastic and equestrian games, to propitiate the *manes* of the massacred Phocæans of Corsica. This very city "the Lydians, who were afterwards denominated Tyrrheni," besieged and took, and hereupon changed its name to "Cære," for the sake of commemorating the good omen contained in the salutation *χαῖρε*, returned by the sentinel on the walls to the Lydian scout. This tradition proves two things: that the Pelasgi of Italy spoke Greek, and that the Tyrrheni did *not*; the latter having mistaken *χαῖρε*, the commonest word in the language, for the *name* of the city, for *that* naturally was the question put by the emissary of the new comers. A most interesting specimen of the primitive Greek spoken by the Agyllæans is furnished

by the funereal vase found at Cære (Campana Collection), exhibiting an aged man laid out on the bier and surrounded by female mourners, each uttering some word of regret. The first, his wife, doubtless, ΕΜΟΣ; the second, ΦΙΑΤΑΤΟΣ; the third, ΗΑΓΑΘΟΣ; the fourth, ΚΑΑΟΣ, &c., written in the quaintest Pelasgic characters, and whose meaning has completely baffled the penetration of its learned describer, Couze ('Bull. del Inst. Rom.' 1866).

Further to the north, we find the important maritime town of Pisa, named after its parent in Elis, similarly falling into the hands of the Tyrrheni, of which event Lycophron preserves the tradition. Again, all the *ancient* Greek cities lying on the Adriatic are named after others previously existing on the main land of Greece. On this side also of Italy prevailed the same tradition of the succession of conquerors. Colonists from Thessaly, records Strabo, founded Ravenna; but being hard pressed by the Tyrrheni, abandoned its possession to the Umbri, who seem to have been able to hold it against this common foe. These primitive Greeks, always, be it observed, "coming out of Thessaly," are nowhere spoken of as on bad terms with the aboriginal Umbri. They appear everywhere as civilizers, and doubtless were received by the rude Celts as friends, and allowed to settle on the coast in peace.

The same Pelasgi had extended their conquests far over Italy. Pliny has told their expelling the Umbrians (aboriginal Celts) of the main land out of their native territory; and Æneas finds Evander with his Arcadians, a pure Pelasgic race, already settled upon the future site of *Roma* (a Greek name be it observed), the former haunt of Cacus (*Kakòs, the Evil One*), with Hercules for his patron-god, engaged in perpetual warfare with the Latin aborigines, but in alliance with the Etruscans of Cære (who were willing to elect him in the place of the deposed Mezentius, or accept his son, Pallas, for their king, but for his own decrepit age, and the restriction of the oracle as to his semi-Sabine son)—boasting of his former inroads into the Latin territory up to the very walls of Præneste, and of the death of her king, Herilus, by his hand. But, strangely varying from the authorities already adduced, he makes Agylla to have been originally colonised by the



Lydian Tyrrhenes; yet he could not have been ignorant of the Grecian tradition——

"Haud procul hinc saxo incolitur fundata vetusto  
 Urbis Agyllæ sedes, ubi *Lydia* quondam  
 Gens bello præclara jugis insedit *Etruscis*  
 Hanc *multos* florentem *annos* rex deinde superbo,  
 Imperio et sævis tenuit Mezentius armis." (viii. 475.)

Strabo adds, the state was honourably distinguished by its justice, and by its never fitting out privateers, which was the regular practice with the other towns of the Confederation. Pliny mentions wall-paintings, "more ancient than the foundation of Rome," as existing in that city in his own times, and of such merit as proved the early period at which that art had reached *perfection* in Italy. These paintings he could not have considered *Etruscan*, for in another place he attributes the origin of Etruscan art to the coming of Demaratus and his Corinthian painters and potters several generations later.

This Agylla, it will be remarked, was traditionally believed a colony of Pelasgi, from *Thessaly*; and from Thessaly\* came *Janus*, son of Apollo, who first brought the arts of peace and the use of coin amongst the savages, the fauns, and nymphs, of Latium, and who later welcomed into his domains Saturnus, the expelled king of Crete. And here it must be noticed (for the importance of the fact will appear in another question to be hereafter treated—the origin of the Etruscan Alphabet) that all the primitive cities of Magna Grecia, using the same alphabet, Sybaris, Siris, Caulonia, Crotona, &c., had traditions carrying up their foundations in every case to the events succeeding the Trojan War, that is to some great revolution in the main land of Greece (phases of which are depicted by various legends) necessitating the emigration of its ancient possessors in search of new homes.

\* Thessaly is always quoted as the birthplace of the Pelasgi. Strabo makes Chios the earliest civilized of all the Grecian states, and the inventor of wine, to be a colony of Pelasgi out of Thessaly. And one tradition as to the origin of the Tyrrheni, preserved by Plutarch ('Romulus'), makes them come thence into Lydia before their final emigration into Umbria. Æolic, the language of the Pelasgi, continued to be spoken in Phocis in Plutarch's times.

Thus much for the Pelasgi. Let us now consider what trustworthy evidence can be produced as to the nationality of their partners in the subjugation of Umbria Celtica, the Tyrrheni. As already stated, they are mentioned under this appellation as a Thracian people by Herodotus. In another passage he remarks that the Thracian was the most numerous of all the races of mankind, after the Indian. They were then occupying Bithynia and Phrygia,\* and consequently had formed part of the kingdom of Croesus, the most powerful of the Lydian dynasty. One of their customs, as described by the historian, is identical with that of the Etruscans in later times, viz., raising a tumulus over the dead, and holding a three days' festival around it, with all manner of funeral games, amongst which the single combat was considered the most important, and received the most valuable of the prizes competed for. Here is the true germ of the gladiatorial shows in Italy, which, in their beginning, were exclusively funeral games, and are confessedly borrowed by the Romans from the Etruscan usage. Although the Asiatic Thracians serving in Xerxes' army wear no body-armour, yet the nation next in order on the muster-roll (name unfortunately lost, but probably cognate to the first) have bronze helmets, with bulls' horns and ears attached, the very fashion so frequent and notable in Etruscan statuettes of warriors. It is a singular coincidence that the generic Latin term for a gladiator should be *Thrax*. Horace, for example, says of his spendthrift's end—

“Thrax erit, aut olitoris aget mercede caballum.”

The Thracian language was predominant in Asia Minor, as the Phrygian and Lycian inscriptions declare. On the first publication of Fellowes' researches in Lycia, I was greatly struck by the resemblance of the Lycian inscriptions, in the forms of the words and the apparent gram-

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\* Cotys, a frequent Thracian name, is also borne by a king of Paphlagonia in the time of Agesilaus (Plut.); so Tralles, by a tribe both in Thrace and Lydia. The Abantes of Thrace make themselves masters of Eubœa ('Theseus'). In return, the Cretans, after settling in Japygia, desert it for Bottia in Thrace.



matical construction, to the Etruscan: and this obvious relationship has since arrested the attention of other inquirers into our subject. Sharpe, indeed, has found reason to believe that the Etruscan alphabet is a mere modification of the Lycian, and brought direct by the Lydian colonists with them into Italy; but this theory will not, as far as my experience goes, bear the test of careful comparison of the two sets of characters. Of this, in ancient times so widely-spoken, Thracian language, the Armenian\* is the only relic now in existence, having been driven into the impenetrable fastnesses of this region by the predominance of Greek in its ancient dominions; exactly as Erse and Welsh are now the scanty representatives of the once universal language of Italy and Gaul; and the yet more confined Basque of that of the Celtiberian millions. To the present Armenian, the Etruscan of the inscriptions stands in precisely the same relation as does German to English; and by this happy discovery, the honour of which, as a first thought, is due to the learned author of the 'Varronianus,' and the full elaboration to the writer already quoted, has the long-despaired-of result been finally obtained—the extracting any real sense from the inscriptions left us by the Tyrrheni of Italy. The main source of the variation of the ancient tongue from the Armenian is due to the admixture of Celtic words, which the native language of the invaders received from that of the aborigines, whose females, as the necessity of the case requires, must have, for the greatest part, constituted the *mothers* of the next generation following the settlement of the Asiatic invaders in the regions of Umbria.

From all this it appears probable, that at different periods following the first great exodus, various Pelasgic colonies as from time to time they reached Italy, became amalgamated with the stronger Asiatic element, which, whether Thracian or Lydian, acknowledged the royal line of Sardis for its head, and so grew into a single great

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\* Herodotus positively states that the Armenians were a colony of the Phrygians of his day, which latter people had originally been neighbours of the Macedonians, and bore the name of Briges (vii. 73). By what connexion of ideas had *Briges* come to be the regular name of the Roman army-slaves, as Plutarch incidentally mentions?

nation, manufacturing and warlike (the former aptitude being due to the Pelasgic, the latter to the Thracian element), under the collective name of Tyrrheni, reducing the Celtic aborigines to the condition of Helots, or serfs, until it pushed its conquests as far south as the fiercer Samnites and Lucanians, who in the end proved too much for the invaders.

Thus, at last, the most ancient people of Greece Proper came to furnish their complement to man the mighty fleets so long the scourge of the Ægean, and of the sea called after them, the "Tyrrhene." We find the Tyrrheni in perpetual hostility with the Greeks, from the very opening of legendary history, as the tradition above cited from Possis declares in the most convincing manner. Doubtless both Pelasgi and Tyrrheni, now grown strong by union, gladly "fed fat their ancient grudge" upon the usurping Hellenes, whenever the chance presented itself. Later, uniting with the Carthaginians, they regularly ravaged the coasts of Sicily and Greece, settled by the descendants of their ancient enemies. Pindar (Pyth. i. 139) celebrates the victory of Hiero, B.C. 480, off Cumæ, over the combined Punic and Tyrrhene fleets, and "their woeful defeat when the leader of the Syracusans flung them into the waves, from their galleys, the scourges of the seas, and deliverered maritime Hellas from their intolerable yoke." In consequence of this defeat they lost their naval supremacy, which passed to the Syracusans, and from this date their decline commences: the Gauls begin to press upon them from the north, the Samnites to strip them of their conquests in the south of the Peninsula. In the preceding century Herodotus (i. 167) mentions their similarly combining with the Carthaginians to drive their piratical foes, the Phocæan settlers, out of Corsica, each power sending sixty galleys for the purpose. This armament seems to have sailed from the harbour of Agylla, for it was thither that the Phocæan prisoners were conveyed to be massacred.\*

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\* "A Lydian or Phœnician trader" is an expression of Plutarch's, indicating the commercial character of either nation as equally recognised by the rest of the world.



It is a curious question how long did the Pelasgi preserve their own language as distinct from that of their *barbarian* confederates? In some cases, no doubt far down into the ages of Etruscan supremacy, as the Cære vase, already adduced, incontrovertibly declares. From their affirmed identity with the primitive Æolians of Thessaly, it is fair to conclude that they spoke the most antique form of that Æolic dialect, of which latter the close affinity to the Latin had not escaped the observation, whilst it excited the surprise, of the ancient grammarians. This supposed affinity is fully borne out by the inscriptions upon our gems, so far as they extend, where all Greek proper names appear written in what afterwards became their regular Latin form. The lion ('Impronte Gemmarie,' iii. 54) of the finest archaic work carries in his legend  $\text{V}\bar{\text{E}}\text{V} = \text{LEO}$ , in Pelasgic letters, a weighty argument in support of what is here advanced. The right clue for tracing how Greek art was planted amongst the Tyrrheni is afforded by Numismatics, and by Numismatics alone. The coins of Siris and Sybaris show us the models followed by the Tyrrhene artists in gems and in metal, the legends on the same the true source of their alphabet; as the examples to be adduced further on will satisfy every one competently acquainted with both classes of remains. The very peculiar fabrique of the old Magna Græcian coinage, relieved on one face, incuse on the other, is of the same nature as marks the embossed gold ornaments of the Etruscans; and be it observed, coins of this make are unknown on the mainland of Greece.

The Pelasgi brought with them the primitive and scanty alphabet of Cadmus, consisting of but sixteen letters, having signs for the long

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And Herodotus records that the Lydians were the first to turn *καπηλολ*, retail dealers. A modern theory, indeed, makes the Etruscans Phœnician colonists (Maffei, Canaanites flying from Joshua); a notion refuted by a single fact—their alphabet identical with the primitive Greek. The Punic colonies, whether in Africa, Sicily, or Spain, retained to the last the national alphabet. Besides, the ancient historians, perfectly well acquainted with everything relating to the Phœnician nationality, never drop the slightest hint concerning *affinity* between the two peoples. Lastly, had such ties of blood existed, would not the Etruscans have gladly sided with Hannibal when occupying their country against their old enemy, Rome, instead of incurring complete ~~her~~ her defence?

vowels only, A, E, V, as in the other Semitic alphabets. These identical forms of letters are to be found on the first coinages of cities of prior foundation to the rise of the Etruscan power, and always independent of the Etruscan Confederation, so that their true ownership is a matter totally beyond dispute. The primal origin of the alphabet is manifested most conspicuously in the form M for Σ, which always appears, retrograde also, on the coins of Sybaris: thus VM for the later ΣΤ.\*

The very nature of the case (before we come to consider the historical evidence upon the subject) tells it was from the Pelasgi that their Tyrrhene allies learnt the use of letters.† At the early period when the latter quitted Asia Minor no alphabet could have ever been seen in their native regions except the Assyrian cuneiform, probably always a hieratic character, too complex and difficult of acquisition for these warlike, restless barbarians. Certain it is that no Etruscan remains exhibit cuneiform letters, or even the *genuine* Punic, which latter their long intercourse with the Carthaginians might readily have introduced amongst them for commercial purposes. But the Etruscans, once formed into an European nation, and taught their letters, set zealously to work to use them, as the large number of their neatly-engraved inscriptions remain to assure posterity, all corro-

\* Sybaris, which brought 300,000 fighting men into the field, was utterly destroyed by its rivals of Crotona, B.C. 510. After lying in ruins about sixty years, it was restored on a small scale, and the few coins extant of the second city are inscribed ΣΥΒΑ in the regular Ionic character; a noteworthy circumstance, indicating the epoch when that character found its way into Italy. Sybaris in the pride of wealth attempted to supersede the Olympic Games, by instituting others on the same plan, with immense money prizes.—(Ath. xii. 522.)

† A yet fuller confirmation is afforded by the legend on the medals of the far more ancient Siris, ΜΟΝΙΔΙΜ for ΣΙΡΙΝΟΣ—the exact character employed on the mirror engravings; and these coins are of the very finest work, with guilloche borders, in fact, identical in design and execution with the best scarabei of Etruria. Be it observed, the regular Greek scarabei, like the coins of the same origin, never have the guilloche border. Siris, a colony from Troy, reinforced later by Ionians from Colophon, in the reign of Alyattes, was destroyed by Sybaris, B.C. 570. The inhabitants kept up the Asiatic fashion of wearing zones of precious material, *μίτραι*. Archilochus quotes the region as the type of everything desirable: οὐ γάρτοι καλὸς χάρος οὐδ' ἐφίμερος οὐδ' ἐραστός, οἷος ἀμφὶ Σίριος βόας—(Ath. 523).



borating in their way the already adduced remark as to the diligence with which they had cultivated learning and science.\* An amusing testimony to their love of literature, is the care they took to give the names of all the personages of the Greek mythology whom they figured on their works; not even omitting to inform the ladies who were the gods and heroes decorating their mirror-backs. In fact, it is clear the directors of the public taste paid great attention to the "religious education" of the community. Doubtless they supposed that indoctrinating the people with these elegant myths (which were, it must be remembered, the sole religion, or as in modern phrase, the "Bible History" of the Greeks) was the surest way of civilizing them, by weaning their minds from their old savage superstitions, whether Oriental or Celtic—anticipating the same effect from the culture of the "ingenue artes," that Ovid long after discovered, to his comfort, in the character of the amiable Cotys, ruler of the parent-stock of the Tyrrheni. In their commonwealth the sacerdotal element, represented by the augurs, was very influential. Such an institution has, in every place and age, a natural fondness for writing and keeping records (whether exercising itself under the form of the priests of Memphis, or of the mediæval monks), which difference in the government of the two contiguous nations may explain the extreme predilection of the Etruscans for monumental records, and the evident disregard of the Romans for the same means of perpetuating their fame. And as bearing upon this point, a remark of Pliny's (iii. 8) may be adduced, that the nation got its name of "Tusci" from the Greeks, "a sacrifico ritu," that is, they derived it from *θυσία*,

\* Herodotus (i. 94) remarks with amazement upon the great similarity to the Grecian of the manners and customs of the Lydians in his own age. The fact he mentions of their being the inventors of coinage presupposes skill in the manipulation of metals, and likewise in the glyptic art. It is evident that the man who cut the die for the stater of Croesus, had long before practised his art on gems; the peculiar cutting of the die proves this to demonstration. Amongst the immigrants into Umbria, therefore, came both expert goldsmiths and gem-engravers, whilst the whole body were so nearly Greeks in their habits, as to be readily susceptible of further improvement when they came into contact with the flourishing Pelasgic colonies that had preceded them.

as the *sacrificial* nation above all others—a characteristic piece of ancient etymology.

The historical accounts of the introduction of alphabetical characters into Italy are extremely curious, and, if rightly understood, fully bear out the foregoing observations, deduced partly from actual monuments, partly from very strong probabilities. Tacitus (xi. 14), when noticing the improvements attempted by Claudius in the Latin alphabet, states, apparently in the words of the learned (though unwise) imperial antiquary, that the *Aborigines* of Latium got their alphabet (the forms of the Latin letters being those of the most ancient used by the Greeks) from Evander, the Arcadian, whilst the Etruscans obtained theirs from Damaratus of Corinth. Now as the latter was banished by Cypselus, about B.C. 629, and Evander was the contemporary of Æneas, this tradition would give the Latin alphabet (that is the *Pelagic* of Italy) a priority of some six centuries over the Etruscan. But this comparatively recent origin of the Etruscan alphabet is contradicted by two facts. In the first place it is indubitably the same as that used on the first coinage of Sybaris, minted before the time of Damaratus, and by a people of the same race as Evander.\* Secondly, had the Etruscans got their letters from Damaratus, they would not have adopted, and ever afterwards retained, the Semitic fashion of writing them (from right to left), for the *βουστροφηδόν* manner of writing Greek (in alternate directions) was already established at Corinth in the generation before him, as appears from what Pausanias notices of the explanatory inscriptions upon the Coffin of Cypselus. The retrograde direction, therefore, of the Etruscan writing, is a conclusive proof that the nation practised it long prior to the date assigned for its introduction amongst them. This semi-mythic personage seems to have had this particular honour assigned him, in consequence of his real services in founding a national school of art in Etruria, of which his own asylum, Tarquinii, was long the centre,

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\* Being a colony from Trœzene, the oldest city in Greece, founded by Pelops himself.



for he was accompanied by the *fictores* (modellers and potters) Eacheir, Diopius, and Eugrammos, and the *painter* Eephrantus (*al.* Cleophantus), and, as Pliny asserts (xxxiv. 5, 43), "ab his Italiae traditam plasticen." This *recorded* immigration of artists in the different branches, from Greece, may reasonably be accepted in testimony to the occurrence of similar migrations at different times; the source of those little colonies of semi-Greeks flourishing at Vulci and Chiusi, and there pursuing their hereditary trade for generation after generation, gradually losing their native language, as the blundered inscriptions upon their works frequently betray. The arrival of the *fictores* (the Greek terra-cotta workers were, as Pliny shows, also *sculptors* in stone) sufficiently explains the appearance, and predominance, of Grecian subjects in the reliefs upon the sarcophagi, and the paucity of any designs in that class that can be referred to a Lydian source. The superior antiquity of the Latin alphabet over the Etruscan must be considered a mere assertion, due to national vanity, the converse argument to that just employed exactly applying to this case: its letters are written from left to right, upon the very earliest examples of its employment, the coinage of *æ*s *grave*. That Evander, or some Pelasgic colonizer of his times, did introduce the primitive Greek alphabet of sixteen letters into Italy is almost certain; that *this*, and no other, was the one adopted by the Etruscans, has been already demonstrated. In fact Mommsen considers the Etruscan to have been purely a primitive Athenian alphabet, and the true nationality of Athens has been already indicated. Pliny himself was struck by the similarity to the Latin\* of the characters on the very ancient bronze tablet of Nausierates, the Athenian, then preserved in the Palatine library.

The Romans owed all their culture to the Etruscans, from whom they learnt the arts of coinage, architecture, terra-cotta work, and painting; calling in artists of that more tasteful race (like

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\* Very instructively exhibited on the early coin of Rhegium, reading REGINON for the Ionic PHINON. The date for the general adoption of the latter character is given as the archonship of Euclides, about B.C. 400.

the far-famed Volca of Veii), when anything of the sort was required for the decoration of their simple edifices.\* Their religion and ritual they borrowed from them also, (sending their sons into Etruria for education, as in after times to Greece, their augurs,) their aruspices; learning, last of all, from Etruscan inscribed works the names of the gods and heroes of Greece, whence their strangely distorted forms stereotyped in Latin. Two little examples curiously exemplify the Roman obligation to their neighbours for instruction in the science of numerals. The *sigla* for "centuria," retained by the Romans down to the latest times, is >, the Etruscan form of K, adopted without changing its position; and, similarly, the Etruscan ↓ for X (Greek), used as a cypher for 50, makes its appearance in the post of honour upon the first gold mintage of the Republic.† In fact, many circumstances would incline us to transpose Tacitus' attribution of the two alphabets, and to give the *Latin* a Corinthian origin, and to assign its introduction at Rome to the son of Damaratus, the Tarquinian *Lucumon*, Lucius, the first of the Tarquins. One almost convincing proof is to be found in its possessing the Corinthian ♀ transformed into its letter Q, a character unknown in Etruscan inscriptions; besides the fact, already noticed, of the direction in which the characters are written, even in the earliest specimens of it extant; and, to conclude this part of my inquiry, the remarkable assertion of Tacitus (or Claudius) remains to be noticed, who makes the Phœnicians borrow their alphabet from the Egyptians, evidently supposing the Punic to be only a modification of the Demotic, as in all likelihood it was.

From all the foregoing historical data it seems possible to construct a hypothesis that may rationally account for the anomalies this

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\* "Ante hanc ædem Tuscanica omnia in ædibus fuisse auctor est Varro," referring to the temple of Ceres decorated with wall paintings and terra-cottas by two Greeks, Damphilus and Gorgasus, evidently Corinthians by their Doric names (Plin. xxxv. 45).

† Many comic masks are evident fac-similes of a monkey's head, and the Romans drew their *histriones* from Etruria. "From the Etruscans they learnt the system of drawing up their troops in *legions*; from the Samnites the use of the *scutum*; from the Iberians of the *gæsum*" (Ath. vi. 273).



chapter has undertaken to explain—the Oriental character of the Etruscan signets, most particularly apparent in their *form*, the scarabeus, so persistently maintained; the equally Oriental character of the designs upon many scarabei of the earlier class, but still more conspicuous upon the *engraved* gold jewels (the *graffiti*), and the partiality of their owners for those commemorating the feats of Hercules, progenitor of the leader of the Asiatic immigration; and, with respect to the Greco-Italian series, the very early period of the mythic events, and the markedly archaic mode of depicting the Grecian deities, limited as they are in number, who are figured upon them, down to the time when the scarabeus came to be discarded for gems cut to the modern form, and manifestly intended from the first to be set and worn in finger-rings.

There is, indeed, a striking resemblance in the mechanical execution of the intagli upon the ruder class of Etruscan gems with that of the Assyrian Cylinders, especially those referred to the Second Babylonian Period. In both classes the designs are worked out entirely by means of the drill, whilst the lines necessary for connecting the reiterated indentations that roughly make out the intended figure have been incised with some hard, scratching medium, possibly a fragment of corundum. There is the same shallowness to be observed in the sinking of the intaglio, and the same sketchiness in the details whenever they are attempted. As to the *guilloche* (chain-border), common to each class, the fantastic birds and monsters, it is much more consistent with the nature of things to suppose such types, expressive of religious ideas,\* to have been brought with them by the first colonists out of Asia, than (with Müller) to explain them as mere unmeaning imitations of the patterns on the Babylonian tapestry imported into Greece and Italy, but certainly not before much later times, when regular trade between Asia and Europe had been esta-

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\* The most convincing example known to me is the graffito-ring ('Impronte Gemmarie,' i. 57), with three figures in regular Babylonian costume, worshipping before a fountain discharging itself out of a colossal lion's head into a basin, a palm tree in the midst.

blished. And what is more, these supposed tapestry types are only to be found on the ruder and primitive scarabei, those of more finished work invariably drawing their subjects from the Grecian Epic Cycle. But the native Lydian dynasty was itself Babylonian, Herodotus (i. 7) positively stating that the first king of Sardis, of the *Heracidan* line, was Agron, son of *Belus*. The Greek Heracles represented the Assyrian Sandon; the Lydian kings therefore called themselves Sando-nidæ, and Sandonis occurs as the name of a councillor of Cræsus. No wonder, therefore, if on the scarabei, Heracles-Sandon wages his symbolical combats with the lion, the bull, the gryphon, and the harpy, in as numerous repetitions, and under but slightly differing forms, as upon the cylinders of the parent race. From the nature of the case, a tinge of Assyrian taste could not but have lingered for many generations amongst the opulent nobles of Etruria.\* Sandon, indeed, as he figures in Babylonian, is the visible prototype of the Heracles of Etruscan art. In the former he wrestles with the Zodiacal Lion, in the exact attitude in which the latter depicts the Nemæan combat, and struggles with the Bull, as afterwards with that of Crete. His love of deep potations, that national vice of the Persian, and doubtless of the Assyrian kings before them (to judge from the occupation in which they commonly delighted to be sculptured), expressed so frequently by his floating on a raft of wine-jars, may be accepted as another evidence of the Assyrian origin of the hero, as well as of the notorious luxury of his European descendants.

Other conspicuous reminiscences of Asia arrest our attention amongst Etruscan remains, especially in those where hereditary practice longest survives—things connected with the burial of the dead. Athenæus (xii. 21) was struck with the appearance of the immense tumuli then covering the plains of the Peloponnesus in every direction,

\* Hercules was also the great god of Tyre, and afterwards of Carthage; apparently the Greeks recognised their hero in the more ancient Baal; in fact, both are explained as typifying the solar god. In Pliny's day the marble Hercules, whom Carthage used to propitiate yearly with a human sacrifice, was standing in Rome, "disregarded, upon the ground, not in any temple, at the entrance to the Cloister Ad Nationes" (xxxvi. 5). Many of the Tharros scarabei exhibit a Hercules done quite in the Assyrian style.<sup>23</sup>



but more especially in Lacellæmon, and found them ascribed by tradition to the *Lydians* and *Phrygians* who had accompanied Pelops\* when he settled there. Similarly, the conical earthen mound, or rather hill, of Alyattes, springing out of a confining ring-wall of Cyclopean masonry, was upon the plains of Umbria reproduced, though on a lesser scale, in the tomb of every *Lucumon*; was adopted by their pupils, the Romans, and again carried to its pristine magnificence in the Mausoleum of Augustus, constructed of the same materials, being an earthen mound, rising in stages, supported by several concentric retaining walls, as well as serving for the model to the stone-built, sepulchral towers of Cæcilia Metella,† of Hadrian, and in the latest ages, of Helena. The grand tumulus of the Lydian king is still crowned with a colossal phallus in stone. The British Museum has lately acquired, out of an Etruscan tomb, the same symbol of the God of Change, Lord of Life and Death, encircled with the epitaph—

.YTM I 11 .2VJ 11 .212 Y2

"Suses the Son of Phintias."

As for the influence of Egypt upon the civilization of the Etruscans, it was probably very small, and even so only exerted itself second-hand through the medium of that syncretistic people, the Phoenicians. Before recent researches had thrown light upon the antique art of the last-named race, the universal prevalence of the scarabeus in Etruscan remains‡ was alone sufficient to suggest the belief of a connection in

\* The influence of the Lydian element in Italy was still very marked in the age of Theopompus (B.C. 350), who has these remarkable words upon it in the twenty-first book of his 'Philippica' (Athen. xii. 32). "The nation of the Umbri (which dwells upon the Adriatic) is astonishingly given to luxury; they have manners and customs *exactly identical with those of the Lydians*, and possessing a fertile region, have in consequence risen to great prosperity."

† The Metelli were an Etruscan clan, as appears from the well-known bronze "Orator," inscribed *VIJVTETM IM 2VVA*. "Aulus Metellus." "Thalna" is a frequent name in the family Juventia. An Etruscan had no difficulty in taking the name of a goddess for his cognomen, the rule with his race being to call themselves after the mother, not the father; they used the matronymic, not the patronymic, in their epitaphs; e. g., *A Volumnius Cafutia natus*—(Perugia).

‡ Besides the alabaster urns with heads and hands attached, of bronze, made after the pattern of the Canopic vases, which have been discovered at Volterra.

religion, and by a natural inference, in kindred, between Egypt and Etruria. No attention was paid to the significant discrepancies that the latter never employed the almost exclusive material of the Egyptian engraver, the soft schists and vitrified clay, nor attempted to copy the hieroglyphics of her supposed models, nor to adopt for her own the unmistakable types of the gods or sacred animals of the assumed source of her artistic education. But, on the other hand, it is now proved by innumerable examples discovered under circumstances that place their authorship out of doubt, that the scarabeus was equally a favourite with the Phœnicians, and, as may justly be supposed, for the same reason as with the Egyptians—its supposed symbolizing of the sun\*—the *Baal* of Phœnicia being even more the peculiar national deity than the *Phre* of Egypt. Now these Phœnicians, by origin of the same stock as the inhabitants of Lower Egypt, but occupying a territory by turns tributary to the Egyptian and the Assyrian empire, put upon their signets devices borrowed impartially from the religions of both countries. Their scarabei exhibit sometimes Osiris, Isis, priests in their regular costume, sometimes true Assyrian types, as the grand symbol of the godhead, the mystic *Mir*, a king combating the lion, the ibex, the stag, and other animal figures; the last being a branch of the art in which they left their masters far behind. Although they thus improved upon the practice of their alternating superiors, the Phœnicians cannot be said to have had an art of their own, although they certainly elaborated a peculiar and even meritorious style; yet in all cases, the *origin* of their subjects may easily be traced to one or the other of the two foreign sources above indicated.†

There is no necessity for supposing, with some theorists, a connection in race between Phœnicians and Tyrrheni: the hypothesis is

\* This may explain what at first sight appears only intended to raise additional merriment by its utter absurdity, Aristophanes choosing a *scarabeus* for the vehicle to carry up the hero of the 'Pax,' Trygeus, to the gates of Heaven.

† This is obvious enough in Sanconiathou's explanation of the symbolism contained in Taaut's figuring Cronos with two pair of wings, one raised and open, the other folded downwards, the regular type of the Assyrian Pantheon.



entirely controverted by the *language* of the latter, which, to whatever family it belongs, is certainly more remote from the Semitic than from any other. But the reason why they adopted the scarabeus from the Phœnicians admits of a very rational and obvious explanation. Even the highly-civilized Greeks of Ionia, as late as the days of Homer,\* knew nothing of the use of signets of *any kind*, as Pliny long ago pointed out. When, at some unknown but later period, they began to adopt this invention, their signets were mere metal rings, with some simple device cut upon the face—like those found in their oldest settlement, Cumæ. It was the Greeks of the islands who first began to employ engraved gems for this purpose: it is even natural to suppose that in the beginning they obtained them engraved to order from the Phœnician traders (then occupying all the places in their seas containing *mines*, Cyprus and Thasos amongst the rest) in the same manner as they did their jewellery. At all events, the earliest Greek gems are scarabei and scarabeoids altogether Phœnician in character. Now the same observation applies with even greater force to the Tyrrheni. As they were necessarily behind their Ionian neighbours in civilization, they must have come into Italy without signets of any kind; for their graffiti gold rings are manifestly mere ornamental jewels, unfitted by their slowness for impressing wax or clay.

Settled in Umbria, they speedily grew opulent, and opulence necessitated the use of signets, indispensable in ancient business transactions, as well as in domestic life as substitutes for locks and keys. The Phœnicians of Sardinia and Carthage were their immediate neighbours; and, as a single fact proves, must have carried on an enormous trade with them, for it was only from their merchants, the monopolizers of Western commerce, that the Etruscans could have procured the *tin*, the indispensable † ingredient in the manufacture of *bronze*, which

\* Whose date the best of authorities, Herodotus, fixes at no more than four centuries before his own; that is about 850 years before our era, long after the foundation of the old Italian cities.

† It would seem that the ancients were unable to smelt the copper ore, of which they had abundance both in Greece and Campania, without the aid of tin to render it

manufacture they had by the times of Socrates carried to such an extent as to make Etruria the Birmingham of Greece itself. This commercial union explains the close political alliance between the two nations, based upon a community of interests, springing from a curious mixture of the manufacturing, trading, and privateering elements.

When the Tyrrheni adopted the scarabeus, it was the only shape under which the gem<sup>•</sup> signet had been seen by them. Their race was naturally ingenious, and, like the Florentines, their legitimate descendants, possessed a special aptitude for all things pertaining to metal-work, jewellery included. That they cultivated the newly introduced art with exceptional eagerness, is apparent not only from the numerousness, but from the costly material of their works, the sardonix, sard, and even pyrope, all which they could only have procured from Arabia or India; in this respect advancing far beyond their teachers, who for the most part contented themselves with the common and easily worked green jasper of Egypt.

Thus, after all, the difficulty respecting the adoption of the *form* disappears upon the closer investigation of the circumstances confining its adopters; but a much more perplexing question remains to be answered: why did these apt pupils so completely discard the favourite *subjects* of their first instructors, and so uniformly adopt the mythology of the Greeks? The only solution to be proposed lies in the old axiom "Knowledge is power." The great Exodus of the original inhabitants of Greece, the race whose religion, manners, and modes of thought are pictured to us by Homer, known as the "Æolie Migration," necessitated by some fierce revolution mythically described as "The Return of the Heraclidæ," had taken place about eleven centuries before our era.\* To this date ascends the foundation of all the primitive cities of Magna Græcia, Siris, Sybaris, Caulonia, Cumæ, &c., characterised

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fusible; otherwise the non-existence of Greek or Etruscan works in unalloyed *copper* is an inexplicable problem.

\* Such migrations of entire tribes were perpetually occurring in those early times. Plutarch ("Numa") mentions a very curious tradition of the Sabines, that they were Lacedæmonians originally, who being dissatisfied with the innovations of



by using the *Pelasgic* alphabet, a plain evidence of the civilization the exiles had carried away with them from their native country. A tolerably correct idea of the advancement they had made in the arts may be derived from the minute descriptions of various works, particularly in metal, left us by Homer, whose education may, with the best reason, be assigned to the same nationality. Their newly-founded cities, in their rapid rise to opulence, readily adopted every improvement in arts, from whatever source it offered itself to them. A conspicuous example is their early adoption of the practice of coining money,\* whether that were the invention of Phidon the Argive, B.C. 850, or of the Lydians somewhat later, yet which certainly did not exist at all when Homer flourished. Now Sybaris had a very large silver currency minted in the six centuries between her foundation and her ruin in B.C. 510. The proficiency in die-sinking conspicuously possessed by her engravers necessarily presupposes a corresponding excellence in all the other arts of design. Similarly, no sooner had the same people acquired the taste for *engraved gems*, than they prosecuted this branch of glyptics up to the highest point known in the archaic style; for the coins of Sybaris and Caulonia, with their bull regardant, their Apollo the Purifier, and their *Etruscan guilloche* borders, demonstrate that many of the finest *Etruscan gems* were in reality due to the old Greek taste nurtured in these its foreign homes.†

It is unnecessary to trouble ourselves with the question that, says

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Lycurgus, left their country on that account, retaining their national arms and discipline to a late period. The same historian repeats the remark that the primitive Latin language contained much more of the Greek element than that spoken in his time.

\* The strange plan of making the coin in relief on one side, but *incuse* on the other, so that the type is hollow, which is peculiar to these ancient Italiote cities, may with much reason be supposed suggested by the gold graffiti ring-shields, punched up by a process exactly similar. This system was an invention of their own, and far from being borrowed from the Greeks, whose earliest coins are more ingot-like and globose than their later. When these cities adopted the Ionic alphabet, they also adopted the Hellenic pattern of coinage.

† The cow and her calf, a favourite scarabeus device, is the regular type of the coins of Coryra with her colonies, and executed in identically the same style on the earlier gems.

Dionysius, puzzled the Roman friends of Mæcenas, as to whether the Pelasgi and Tyrrheni were one and the same people. It is quite sufficient for the present purpose to establish the fact that the Tyrrheni, settled in Italy, found the Pelasgi there before them, as the above-quoted legend of Agylla proves; and that they cordially joined with them, whether already settled there, as Evander, or new-comers, like Æneas, against the common enemy, the Umbri and the Aborigines. These Tyrrheni were a wealthy, ingenious, and more especially an imitative people: they brought no regular art with them from Asia, except some scanty reminiscences of the Assyrian. Their allies, the Phœnicians, had no art of their own to teach them, they, too, being a nation of copyists. The Etruscan remains in the Phœnician taste, of which some few examples are known, have almost as much reason to be supposed importations of the Tyrian traders, as works done by their imitators in Italy. The Tyrrheni, therefore, had no other models, when they began to cultivate the useful and decorative arts, than what they saw possessed by their Old-Greek neighbours, their subjects or allies; and having a genius very susceptible of culture, though uninventive, they set vigorously to work at naturalizing amongst themselves the Pelasgic arts. First of all, commencing with the most important, they copied their peculiar architecture in the famed Cyclopean walls\* of their newly-founded cities, and equally in their domestic architecture, which their rock-cut *atria*, the sole vestiges of it left, show to have been the simplest of styles, the severe Doric. From time to time, as already pointed out, little colonies of artists, painters, and modellers, expelled from Greece by the perpetual revolutions distracting that country, sought the patronage of the wealthy and art-loving masters of Italy. In short, the same patronage of Grecian professors and artists

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\* The Pelasgi were the Freemasons of antiquity. The Athenians, as already noticed, hired them to fortify their Acropolis. Some of their mysterious sculptures irresistibly carry the mind back to the imagery of the farthest East. A most interesting example is a scarabeus (Castellani) showing a youth (Phaeton?) driving a three-headed horse—reminding us of the figure of the Hindoo seven-headed steed of the Sun, guided by his charioteer *Arun*, which last, again, may have a more than accidental connexion with the favourite Etruscan name *Aruus*.



in all branches that characterised the early Empire of Rome, seems to have been rehearsed some five or six centuries before, and on the same stage, in the flourishing times of the Etruscan Confederation.

These Tyrrheni do not appear to have possessed any definite mythology of their own—perhaps like some tribes of Circassia to this day, they worshipped natural phenomena alone. In the latter country, the god for the day, usually the first *bird* \* seen, is appointed by the chief. Augury, in fact, was the only *national* religion of the Etruscans themselves. Their tomb-paintings and sculptures present us with no divinities not immediately recognisable as adoptions from the Grecian system, except the very remarkable introduction of the Genii, governing the fate of man. This doctrine, therefore, of the being of the “Genius,”† is the only trace of an Etruscan religion properly their own. As for the winged forms they give to some of the Greek deities, this is merely a reminiscence of archaic art, for so was Artemis figured in that old Corinthian carving, the Coffer of Cypselus.

It is, however, to be noticed as the seeming evidence of some pre-existing national religion amongst the Tyrrheni, that whilst they adopted implicitly all the gods of Greece, together with all the mythology belonging to them, in only two cases did they retain the original names of these gods—Heracles and Apollo; all the others they re-styled in their own strange-sounding language. Thus Zeus becomes *Tinia*; Posidon, *Nethunus*; Hades, *Charun*; Hephaestos, *Sethlans*; Hermes, *Mecur*; Dionysos, *Pupluus*; ‡ Phœbus, *Usil* (whence Aurelia),

\* Lampridius in his list of the numerous accomplishments of his hero Sev. Alexander, says that as an “ornithoscopus” he surpassed the Pannonians; putting them at the head of the profession in those later times.

† Who is called a son of Jupiter in the legend concerning the apparition of his earth-born child, Tages, turned up by the ploughshare in a Tarquinian field, and the instructor of the Etruscans in their national art, *haruspicina*, divination by the entrails of victims. Creuzer espies in Tages a Pelasgic apostle to the barbarian new-comers. Herodotus remarks that the only religious notions of the most important of the Thracian race, the Getae, was the belief in some superior being, Zamolxis, or Gebel-ziris, to whom they sent a messenger, in the form of a human sacrifice, every fifth year.

‡ Giving his name to Populonia, as well as the type of its coins, the full-faced *Bacchic Mask*. In that city Pliny had seen a very ancient statue of “Jupiter” carved out of an enormous vine stem; doubtless the old Bearded Bacchus.

and *Aplu*; Artemis, *Thana*; Aphrodite, *Turan*; Hera, *Thalna*; Athene, *Minerfe*. It is another unaccountable fact, amongst so many, that neither Ares nor Eros are to be seen in Etruscan art. It is however possible these *Etruscan* titles were mere epithets, explaining the character of the several new deities to the ignorant multitude amongst whom their worship had been recently introduced;\* so much at least may be inferred from that given to the supreme god, *Tinia*, plausibly derived from *tan*, as signifying the "fire-god," i.e., the Thunderer. The Tyrrheni must have had some powerful motive for substituting these native words for the Greek appellations of deities† whose types they had in all other points so implicitly copied from the foreigner; for the names of the Greek heroes, whom they were equally fond of transferring to the domain of their own art, are translated as closely as the very diverse genius of the two languages would allow.

Nothing more than a passing allusion is here admissible to Niebuhr's theory making Rome to have been a great and powerful member of the Etruscan Confederation during the regal period. Everything, however, that is presented by archæology confirms Varro's assertion that, in early Rome, "*omnia fuere Tuscanica*." Her religion, as the names of the chief deities (above all of the class to whom *domestic* worship was paid, and, therefore, the true national divinities, the *Lares*, "lords") and the institution of augurs still declare, came direct from Etruria, as did her architecture and singularly clumsy substitute for coin. Rome's obligations to Etruria for education in the arts and conveniences of life are perpetuated in such technical terms as "*basterna*," "*capital*," "*fetial*," "*laquear*," "*santerna*," "*histrio*," ‡ "*naenia*," &c.

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\* Some light is thrown on this mystery by a statement of Plutarch's respecting the primitive worship of the Romans. Idols were unknown in the temples of Rome for full one hundred and seventy years after its foundation, they having been expressly prohibited by Numa. This king was always regarded as a disciple of Pythagoras, that sage having, if Epicharmus is to be credited, been enrolled a citizen of Rome during his reign.

† "*Tanat*" is rendered by "*Artemis*" in the epitaph of a Phœnician resident at Athens. From this, too, must *Tanaquil* "*Artemidora*" be derived.

‡ Volca is summoned from *Veii* by Tarquinius Priscus to make the *tema-cottia*.



The mention of the primitive coinage of Rome unavoidably recalls that most inexplicable anomaly in the practice of the Etruscans—why they, so fond of imitating the Greeks in all other respects, should never have adopted that most useful as well as elegant of all their inventions, the coining gold and silver money. This, indeed, has always struck me as the greatest of all the anomalies in the archæology of this enigmatical race. Their kinsmen in Asia dispute with Phidon the honour of the invention. Their allies in Magna Græcia were from prehistoric times minting a very extensive as well as artistic coinage. The Etruscans, the wealthiest, most commercial, and luxurious people of Hesperia, during the whole of their national existence, used no *coined* money at all. The clumsy pieces of cast copper, the *as grave*, the proper Roman *pecunia*, was possibly a mere method of bringing out the produce of their mines in convenient form for working up as the brazier's art (that national one) required; or, at all events, could have only served for small change in domestic transactions, so wonderfully low was then the value of copper as compared with silver.\* And what makes the matter yet more inexplicable, this very people was the most ingenious and tasteful of the goldsmiths and metal workers of antiquity, and set its chief glory in successfully copying not only the statuary, but also the *toreutic* chasings of the Greeks. Neither did they import the silver coinage of their neighbours and use it as a substitute for a national currency; otherwise Athenian or Corinthian money would now turn up in buried hoards in their sepulchres, just as the aurei and denarii of the Roman empire do from time to time in various provinces of India, whither the coin had been carried in exchange for precious stones and spices. It is plain, therefore,

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statue of Jove for the Capitoline Temple. The prodigy attending the baking of the quadriga on that occasion is too trite to need quotation. The Hercules by the same artist was still standing when Pliny wrote (xxxv. 45), confirming Varro's "*elaboratam hanc artem Italiæ et maxime Etruriæ.*" Etruria stood, as the fountain head of religious ceremonial and music, in precisely the same relation to Rome as Thrace, the country of Orpheus, Thamyris, Linus, and the Bacchanals, did to Greece.

\* The Sicilian pound (*litra*) of twelve copper ounces (over Troy weight) only equalled the Ægeetan obolus, which makes copper then current at exactly one-eighth of its present selling price.

that, from the same unexplained, but doubtless very sufficient reason, that prevented their friends, the Egyptians and Phœnicians, from having any coined money at all (as long as their independence lasted), so did the Tyrrheni of Italy conduct their large money transactions by taking into account the weight alone of the precious metals. Perhaps, too, like their Punic \* neighbours (for their *home* purposes), the Etruscans were so far advanced beyond the notions of antiquity as actually to have a non-metallic currency, a mere representative of value, like the Carthaginian *leather bank-notes*; and the “*nummi scortei et testacei*,” the gilt leathern and earthenware tickets traditionally supposed to have been the only money known at Rome before Numa’s reign, may contain some grains of truth tending to throw a light on the practice of the older Etruscan population.†

To sum up my deductions from the numerous facts presented in the foregoing pages, they seem to me thus interpreting ancient historical notices by means of modern archæological evidence, to yield a rational solution of the problems with which this chapter started. The aborigines of Umbria were a Celtic people, cognate to that which, to a much later period, preserved its nationality upon the lakes of Helvetia. This relationship is made out to demonstration by the identity of the remains—stone and bronze weapons, and rude pottery, now disinterred in the Italian *terra mara*—with those brought to light from the Swiss *pfahlbauten*. “These Umbrians were expelled by the Pelasgi, who in their turn were expelled by the Lydians, afterwards called Tyrrheni from the name of their king” (Plin. iii. 8). That is,

\* All the Carthaginian coins, prior to its becoming a Roman city, were minted in Sicily for the pay of the mercenaries then employed by the State.

† “Ut vero vendendi et emendi utilitas, et ut facultas regie largitali suppeteret, in æris usum exultam politius terram et igne solidatam certis quoque expressionibus figuratam usui habuerunt. Sed posteriores fastidiantes prisce utilitatis inventum, formatos e cortis orbes *auro medico* signaverunt, quibus regum munificentia et commerciorum necessitas, intactis collationibus utebantur. Sequentior vero ætas æris redundante materia, quam publicus jam mœnium (numinum?) recusabat ornatus, distorta ut prior monumenta meditata, æs validum ipso pondere pretiosius figuravit,” &c. Cap. ‘De Inhibenda Largitate’ in the treatise ‘De Rebus Bellicis’ attached to the ‘Notitia Imperii.’ Suidas quotes Suetonius much to the same effect.



the primitive inhabitants of Greece take possession of the coast some ten centuries before our era, driving the Celts inland, where they maintained themselves independent, for they are found making alliance with the Roman invaders in the last Etruscan war, A.U.C. 444. These Old-Greeks bring with them a primitive alphabet, and all the branches of archaic art, as their tombs at Cumæ testify. They found powerful cities all along the Hesperian coast, Agylla, <sup>6</sup>Herculaneum, Sybaris, Siris, Pæstum, Caulonia, &c., many of which perish by intestine quarrels, or assaults of the native barbarians,\* long before Rome takes any part in the affairs of the peninsula. Lastly enters a very considerable migration from Asia Minor, the Tyrrheni, who become possessed of the Pelasgian conquests in Umbria, partly by force, partly by alliance, as probably belonging to the same family, and thence extend their conquests southwards, until they encounter the more ferocious Samnites. Having apparently no well-defined religious system of their own, beyond some simple forms of nature-worship connected with certain appearances in the heavens (as may be deduced from the technical sense of "templa," the partitioning of the sky in augury), with some doctrines concerning guardian angels analogous to the Zoroastrian teaching, they readily superadd upon this foundation the more tangible and sensuous mythology which they find already flourishing amongst their Grecian predecessors. At the same time they are found in intimate connexion with the Phœnicians who may have worked the copper-mines of Italy in prehistoric times, as they did those of gold and copper in several parts of Greece, Spain, and the islands. From these the Tyrrheni probably learnt the brazier's trade, for which they subsequently became specially celebrated; for the style of their work in bronze strongly resembles that on the Cypriote bowls of indubitable Phœnician manufacture. From these, too, they learnt gem-engraving—that is, the actual process; for on their gems, as in all other sculptures, it was Greek art that

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\* Siris is destroyed by Sybaris, Sybaris by Crotona, Old Pæstum by the Lucanians, &c.

supplied the designs. This art they cultivated, and even naturalized, equalling their models as far as the limits of the archaic style extended. The anxiety of the directors of the public taste to diffuse accurate knowledge of Greek fable is evinced by the care taken to accompany these representations by explanations in the *native* tongue.\* Why Etruscan art never advanced beyond these limits is simply due to the fact that the duration of the archaic style happened exactly to coincide with that of the flourishing times of their own commonwealth. As before noticed, the defeat off Cumæ deprived them of the mastery of the seas they had hitherto claimed for their own; and, fifty years later, the great Gallic invasion swept away much of their ancient prosperity on the land; whilst, shortly after, their ruin was consummated by the fatal fight upon lake Vadimon, which, as Livy expresses it, "*fregit Etruscorum opes.*"

\* The slight influence Phœnician ideas had over the Etruscan religion is manifest from the non-occurrence of Phœnician names attached to the figures of gods whom the Greeks had no difficulty in identifying with their own. Thus they translated the *Melcoruth* of Carthage by Cronos, *Ashmon* by Asclepios, *Ashtaroth* by Aphrodite, *Tinaith* by Artemis. But the Etruscans went on to the last addressing their new Grecian *idols* by the singular, perhaps Scythic, appellations already quoted.







GREEK AND ROMAN GLYPTIC ART.

ALTHOUGH it is impossible to lay down any precise rules for distinguishing between the works of the Greek and the Roman periods, yet there are certain general principles which will be found to prevail universally, and which, aided by practical experience, may enable the student in most cases to separate the productions of either school.

By "Greek works" are meant those produced previously to the establishment of the Roman empire under Augustus; although after this date the best were still due to Grecian artists, as the names engraved on the finest examples plainly establish; but yet the Imperial epoch has a character of its own, the nature of which I shall further on attempt to define.

To commence with the class whose style of art is the most strongly marked — the *Archaic Greek*.\* These are engravings in shallow

\* Most of them are Italo-Greek, their style being identical with that of the peculiar coinage of that region, issued antecedent to 500 a.c. The *Pelagic* colonists had learnt gem-engraving *after* their arrival in Italy, as their earliest cemeteries attest by the *absence* of all engraved stones. That Southern Italy, not Hellas herself, should have produced the larger share of these monuments of refined luxury, was to be expected from the infinitely superior opulence of the colonies over their parent, whence the region obtained the arrogant appellation of *Magna Græcia*, as Diodorus has noticed.

intaglio, of the most minute elaborateness, principally executed by means of the adamant-point, and enclosed within the so-called Etruscan border. On account of this border, such intagli were formerly all assigned indiscriminately to the Etruscan class—an opinion at present quite abandoned. Their usual subjects are single figures—animals of chase; frequently heroes, especially those connected with the tale of Thebes (of Troy more rarely), and the legend of the Argonauts—in short, all the usual themes of Attic tragedy. For some unknown reason, the story of Philoctetes was as popular with the artists of this school as that of Capaneus with the Etruscans—if a conjecture may be permitted, because his fate was an example of the divine vengeance pursuing the violation of a sacred promise; for Philoctetes was stung by a serpent as he was taking up the arms of Hercules out of their hiding-place, which he had sworn to the dying hero never to reveal to the Greeks.\* Thus, one fine intaglio (Hertz) represents him removing the bow and arrows from the altar under which they lay concealed, whilst a serpent, twisting about it, stings him unperceived in the leg. Another, of yet finer execution, depicts him lying on the ground, driving away with a bird's wing the swarming flies from the festering wound; whilst Ulysses, stealing up from behind, purloins the much dreaded weapons suspended from the rock above his head. Both these designs are inclosed within very elaborate borders, precisely those seen on the most finished scarabei. Of Homeric subjects the most frequent is the death of Achilles, doubtless for the moral deducible from his fate. Popular also in that age was the scene of Priam kneeling before the slayer† of his son, and offering a ransom

\* That a moral was manifestly intended by the choice of such subjects, I have already suggested (\* Handbook, p. 35). This explains the appearance of the fabled punishments of the next world, the Theseus, the Tantalus (Berlin), and the Sisyphus (Blacas), the finest, as well as the most interesting, of the class. His punishment is there depicted as the attempt to raise a huge squared block upon a step of a pyramidal edifice.

† An exhortation to placability, as Horace uses the same incident:—

“Unxere matres Ilie addictum feris  
Alitibus et canibus homicidam Hectorem.”



for his corpse. One beautiful scene of the kind (formerly Dr. Nott's) is a perfect example of a Greek picture, the group being completed by the introduction of the commiserating Briseis and a guard; whilst a large caduceus in the field alludes to the guidance of Hermes on the aged king's dangerous expedition.

"Quin et Atridas duce te superbos  
 Illo dives Priamus relicto  
 Thessalos ignes etiniqua Troje  
 Castra fefellit."

The design is executed by a series of delicate lines, hardly any part being actually sunk; indeed it may be described rather as etched upon than sunk in the stone. Nevertheless the figures, despite their minuteness, have a force and expressiveness far beyond what could be expected in this department of art. Engravings in this peculiar style are very uncommon: a head of a poet thus executed is shown as one of the chief rarities of the Florence cabinet.

Another Homeric subject, of which several repetitions are known, presents the horses of Achilles lamenting over the corpse of Patroclus, stretched out before them on a bier. Here the hindmost steed is so faintly traced on the gem as to be scarcely discernible at the first view, but still is perfectly finished in every part, and the entire group full of life and vigour.\*

The predominant passion of the Hellenic mind for *male* beauty, in preference to female, has produced a large class of exquisite works, as soon as the art began to attain perfection, in the full-length figures of the beloved *ephebus*, depicted in various attitudes. A favourite pose is the caressing a dog, or a bird, a stork or quail, carrying a vase, bowling

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\* The delicacy of the touch in many of these pure Greek intagli has completely baffled all attempts at imitation on the part of the most skilful moderns, with all their aids of magnifying glasses and ingenious machinery. Amongst the most wonderful known to me I cannot resist quoting a seated Sphinx (Hertz) drawing a necklace out of a casket on the ground by her side; and also a winged leopard in the act of springing forward (Beverley). The gem of the latter is a banded agate of vivid colours, arranged in successive *chevrons*, and the design is so artfully managed, that the lovely little monster appears as if bounding out of the dark shade into the white transparency of air.

the *trochus*, or breaking up the ground with a mattock—a strange occupation the last, according to modern nations, to be chosen for the subject of a gent, but easily intelligible when we know that this kind of hard labour formed the grand element in the training of the athlete; and therefore the attitude possessed as much interest to those ages as that equally popular one of the *discobolus*, which many others of the finest gems present. This illustrates the anecdote told by Timæus (Athen. xii. 518), that certain Sybarites, visiting at Crotona, on seeing the youths in training thus employed, expressed their wonder that people possessing so fine a city should have no slaves to dig up the palaestra ground for them. It is for a different reason, as being the deified patron of husbandry, that *Bonus Eventus*, the Triptolemus of the Greeks, is figured on Roman monuments with a mattock (*rutrum tenens*) in his hand.

Though all Archaic-Greek and Italiote \* intagli much resemble the better-executed Etruscan—and for a sufficient reason, both races having derived the art of design from Assyria, directly or indirectly, its true fountain-head—yet, if we take the works of the Etruscan school, whose origin is authenticated by the Tyrrhenian legends upon them, we find the drawing, even in the best examples, more stiff, and, above all, more exaggerated, than in the Archaic-Greek, though in no respect falling short of the latter in the point of mechanical execution. The Italiote Greeks, as time went on, formed a peculiar style of their own, based on the “first manner,” but more loose and flowing, now known as the *Campanian*; and it seems to have been engravers of this school who executed for the Romans the few intagli we have that can with certainty be assigned to the Republic. It is, indeed, this slightness of the intaglio, and careful finish of all the details, that form the grand distinction between the true Greek works and those done by the best artists of Roman times.

As a general rule, these fine early intagli will be found in bright,

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\* The ancient term neatly distinguishing the *Greek* colonists from the aboriginal *Itali*.



pale yellow sards, much resembling the European topaz in tint. This stone the Greeks classed under their *jaspis*, distinguishing such gems as the "sphragides," or *seal-stones* specially, "*quoniam optime signant*," as Pliny remarks; and Dioscorides gives to the same sort the appropriate name of *terebinthizon*, "turpentine-like," from its unctuous and limpid yellowness. *Χλωρός*, the usual epithet for the *jaspis*, means green or yellow indifferently. Our title *sard* for all such varieties is a complete misnomer; for that appellation was confined by the ancients to the blood-red species, the signification of the word in Persian. The Etruscans and Italo-Greeks, on the contrary, often took for their scarabei the carnelians supplied by their own river-beds. Many Etruscan intagli, which now appear in the shape of ring-stones, retain traces of having been sawn off the bases of scarabei for setting in rings both in ancient and in modern times. The natives of Greece and Asia Minor did not employ the scarabeus form to any great extent, and when Greek intagli are quoted as occurring upon scarabei, a reference to the originals will prove that they are actually *scarabeoids*, upon which fashion and the reasons for its adoption sufficient has already been adduced under that head.\*

When we arrive at the most flourishing period of the glyptic art under Alexander and his immediate successors, we recognize at once the productions of the most refined natural taste now fully developed by education, and availing itself of a perfected *technique*. In the archaic period no portraits occur; in *this* we obtain many heads of deities and of *princes*,† full of life and individuality, as well as whole-

\* The finest example of the true Greek scarabeoid known to me exists in the Leake Collection. The stone is of considerable size ( $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{3}{8}$  inch) a beautiful sapphirine calcedony. The intaglio is a lady, fully draped, with her hair filleted and veiled, seated in a chair of elegant form; before her stands a handmaid similarly costumed, but without the veil, holding up a mirror, her left hand, depending, holds a garland. In the field, above, is written ΜΙΚΗΣ from left to right on the *gem*. Nothing can surpass the beauty of the drawing in the figures, the arrangement of the drapery, or the carefulness of the execution. A second scarabeoid of the same size and material bears Ulysses, nude, leaning on his beggar's staff, and recognised by Argus, admirable for the treatment of the naked body.

† As is curiously attested by Alexander's restricting the privilege of engraving his

length figures. The latter are universally *nude*—the received mode for expressing the divine nature of the personage represented in the perfect stage of Hellenic art. "*Græca res est nihil velare*," observes Pliny, with regard to statuary. The intaglio still continues of little depth compared to that of the Roman school, but yet is sunk deeper into the gem than in the works of the archaic style. There is a vigour and elegance in the drawing upon these gems that bespeak their origin at the first view, as well as a delicacy and a softness in the treatment of the flesh, never to be discovered in the productions of the Imperial ages. The finest examples known by me in this class are the Pulsky Ariadne and Demetrius Poliorcetes, a Philip V. of Macedon, formerly Horace Walpole's (all sards), and a Mithridates in amethyst, recently brought from India. The Blacas cabinet possesses a large and very spirited bust of Miltiades wearing a helmet (so attributed by Visconti upon satisfactory grounds); also another of Perseus, last of the line, in the winged helmet of his mythic namesake, upon the "royal" lazulite. But none of these regal portraits equal in historical value the sard recently communicated to me by Mr. Muirhead, which bears three heads side by side, in the grand Græco-Egyptian manner, of Ptolemy Soter, laureated, Berenice, and, furthest from the eye, their son Philadelphus, diademed. The last distinction declares the gem engraved after the apotheosis of his sire.

The sole technical peculiarity that is noticeable in these performances is the way in which the hair is treated. It is represented by a countless number of fine lines cut with the diamond-point, never crossing, but kept perfectly distinct from each other. Any ornaments that may be introduced, such as the wreaths round the heads of deities, the diadems of princes, the hair-cauls, fillets, earrings, necklaces, on

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portrait to Pyrgoteles alone (Pliny; Apuleius). The gem chosen was, according to Pliny, the emerald, ever the favourite with the Orientals. This famous signet, given by the dying hero to Perdicas, was long in known existence. As its second owner was slain in Egypt, it doubtless was carried (the rule in such cases) to the victor, Ptolemy Soter, and thus may have come down to Augustus, who used for his first imperial seal a head of Alexander, until, arrived at the height of his power, he ventured to employ his own image, engraved by Dioscorides.



the female busts, are always rendered with the most scrupulous fidelity. In a word, the artist shows himself to have been enamoured of his own work, and never to have dismissed it from his hands before every portion, even of the accessories, had received the last degree of finish. In this style, also, the amber-coloured sard continues the favourite material; then the browner *sardoine*. Portraits of sovereigns, however, are often met with in the fine dark purple Indian amethyst, a gem which at the time was perhaps confounded with the sapphire, and equally valued under the name of *hyacinthus*. The same school has left us many admirable heads and figures in the jacinth (essonite)\* a stone so much loved by the Greeks, from its resemblance to the highly-prized amber,† and from its extreme lustre when polished. For figures single or grouped the favourite medium with the Greek from the very first was the sardonyx cut transversely (improperly called by collectors the banded, or tricoloured agate). Its great recommendation, says Pliny, was the non-adhesion of the wax to its surface in sealing. But on this stone, so commonly used in archaic glyptics, no heads or other subjects in the "Perfect style" ever occur; doubtless because of the interference of the bands of colour with the effect of the work itself, which had now become the paramount consideration. There is another kind of engraving, the *incavo-relievo*, which produces its impressions in flat relief within a sunken field. This rare style is sometimes termed "Egyptian relief," and was certainly borrowed from that nation, who have employed it generally in cutting out their hieroglyphics in the softer kinds of stone. In this method the design, though actually in relief, does not project beyond the surface of the slab, and is, consequently, protected by a sunken hollow. The 'Impronte Gemmarie' contains a Silenus bust in full

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\* A variety of the garnet, varying in tint from bright yellow to brownish red, popularly the "cinnamon stone."

† The Greek love for the colour yellow is manifest in their choice of gems, and in their preference of gold for small articles of jewellery, such as ear-drops, for which other nations preferred pearls and precious stones. On the contrary, with the Romans, children of Mars the *μαρσιφόνος*, red was the favourite.

face, a work of wonderful expression, done in this style, from an antique paste formerly Dr. Nott's. Considering the effectiveness of this invention; and, still more, the protection it affords to the impression in the wax, it is only surprising that it was not more generally adopted by the ancients.\*

Much of this manner still survives in the productions of the Augustan age; the finest portraits of him (like the large Marlborough sardoine †) and of the members of his family, exhibiting the same flat relief in the wax and the same careful treatment of the hair. But it remains true, that the attention to the latter particular is one of the main distinctions between the ancient and the later engraver that serve for the discrimination of either style in heads on gems; being due to the difference of the instruments employed by each. Augustus had transplanted into Rome the pure Greek art, still living, though with a waning lustre, in its native regions, and replaced therewith the debased Campanian and Sicilian schools, which alone, after the collapse‡ of Etruscan art, had supplied the wants of the coarse, tumultuous Republic. This innovation displays itself in his coinage, much of it being as rude as the preceding consular series; some, on the other hand, evincing much taste and skill in the moneyer—at least equal to those possessed by the later Selencidan. Greek portraiture in gems had only reached its apogee in the preceding generation;

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\* Another uncommon caprice of Roman art is the union of cameo and intaglio in the same work. A magnificent example is the *Blacas Livia*, her bust as Ceres in intaglio, surrounded by seven groups of the attributes of all the other goddesses in low relief, very minutely represented. The second, much more elegant in design, gives the bust of Antinous, as Bacchus, intaglio, with two graceful Mænads in relief for supporters, to speak heraldically, a reclining Cupid above, Pan below, completing the *encadrature* of the portrait of the deified beauty. The stone is a remarkably fine nicolo (Heywood Hawkins).

† Once Winckelmann's; there is a caduceus in the field, to deify the subject.

‡ Which may be roughly taken as coincident with the Second Punic War, or *a.c.* 200. After its close Tib. Gracchus found the Etruscan territory entirely occupied by barbarian slaves. Marcellus first decorated Rome with Greek works, the spoils of Syracuse, for which the old conservatives loudly censured him. But soon after Cato the Censor had to complain that his countrymen thought nothing good that was not Greek.



I know nothing to equal the Townley paste, a head of Mithridates, taken from a gem of the same size as his tetradrachm, and identical with that magnificent coin in beauty and expression. And the same praise is due to an equally large paste of Nicomedes III., published in the '*Impronte Gemmarie*' (iv. 85). The great camei of Augustan date are in design worthy of the best age of Greece. But it is amazing to mark how rapidly the glyptic art deteriorated under the following Caesars, especially in the latter branch, and how wide the degeneration between the camei of Claudius (so numerous extant) and those of his adoptive grandfather. The Roman style soon became fixed, and the following may be pointed out as its general characteristics. There is a great aiming at effect, with a negligence in details; the intaglio is sunk as deep as possible into the stone, and heads in full face, for the same reason, now first come into fashion; relief in colour is sought after by cutting through the blue stratum into the black ground of the nicolo (Arabian sardonyx), a stone unknown to the Greeks. The hair is rendered more in masses, as in a painting; the drapery is merely indicated by a few touches—in short, everything is kept subordinate to the face; and this, though usually effective and full of individuality, has a stiffness of expression unknown in likenesses after the life that come from the old Grecian hand. In the female portraits, indeed, more care is bestowed upon the hair, with its arrangement after the complicated and tasteless fashions of the age; but even here the work falls very far short of the elaboration of the same portions in the heads dating from the period preceding the Empire.

Portraits appear now figured as *busts*, with some drapery on the shoulder; whereas the Greek show nothing beyond the head and neck. The full lengths are more or less draped;\* the emperor stands forth in complete armour, or, if a bust, usually with Jove's *ægis* thrown across the breast. In groups we often see more than two figures introduced; but except to image, in the capacity of a talisman, the patron

\* Pliny speaks of statues in the *tega* as a Roman invention, like everything else with them, borrowed from the Etruscan, as the "Aretine Orator," an ancient Metellus, remains to assure us.

god of the wearer, little is now drawn from Greek mythology, nothing from poetry. The general subjects are the occupations of daily life, religious ceremonies, the workman at his trade, hunting, fishing, portraits of the individual, or of some special friend, in which collectors vainly puzzle themselves to find out imperial likenesses. But the most productive source of gems with the Romans was their passionate addiction to judicial astrology,\* and their love for the games of the circus. But for the two latter motives, the Lower Empire would have been entirely barren in this field of art; skill had declined too far to produce portraits capable of satisfying even the moderate requirements of the age.

In the Roman period, even at its two most flourishing epochs, the ages of Augustus, and, a century later, of Hadrian, we no longer meet with scenes drawn from the Epic Cycle, so popular with the independent Greeks; and so unalterable is this law, that the very appearance of a design, either poetical or historical in its nature, upon a supposed Roman gem, affords sufficient grounds for attributing the work to some artist of the Revival, a judgment which will usually be verified and confirmed by a careful examination of its details.

With regard to *mechanical execution*, it is fully apparent, in many cases, that the stone has been hollowed out to a great depth by the aid of the drill, and the necessary finish of details, the features, the hair, and the drapery, put in afterwards with the adamant point. Much of the barbarous work of the later times has, beyond all mistaking, been done with the wheel, an Oriental invention,† probably introduced by the makers of talismans from the native region of their trade. Certain it is that the rude intagli of the Lower Empire bear no traces of the primitive *technique*, probably then abandoned as too laborious, which so strongly characterises the works of a better age. Earlier

\* In which even the best of the emperors were the greatest proficients. Hadrian, says Spartian, had written out for himself an *anticipatory* diary containing the future events of each day down to the moment of his death. Sev. Alexander surpassed in the science all the adepts of his time, and founded colleges for its cultivation at Rome.

† Or rather a varied application of the drill.



intagli display a wonderful polish in their interior, and there may be some foundation for the opinion of the practical Natter, that the means used by the ancient engravers *polished* and cut the intaglio by one and the same operation, which would account for the perfect internal lustre of many seemingly unfinished engravings. In the modern practice this polish is the result of a tedious after process, the rubbing diamond-dust with a leaden point into the intaglio itself, and therefore it is only to be found in the works of the best artists, executed in imitation of the antique.\* For this very reason, the constant presence of such a polish upon every variety of Roman work down to a certain period is a most singular phenomenon, and in all probability the result of the peculiar agent employed in cutting the intaglio. It, therefore, is entirely wanting in the hasty talismanic engravings of the Lower Empire, which, beyond dispute, are entirely wheel-cut, as well as in the contemporary Sassanian seals executed by the same process.

In many Roman heads again, the hair when intended for short and curly (as on those of Hercules, M. Aurelius, and Caracalla), is rendered by a succession of drill-holes set close together. But in true Greek work, every curl would have been minutely finished, and the hairs composing each represented by the light touches of the *adamant* point. The same peculiarity is observable in the busts of the Roman school, in which, towards the close of the second century, the hair and beard are similarly done by holes drilled into the marble. The later camei also frequently exhibit the same perfunctory mode of obtaining the desired effect.

Before quitting this part of the subject, it may be observed that certain portraits appear very abundantly on Roman gems—of Augustus and of Nero especially. Of the youthful M. Aurelius they are also plentiful, but the magnificent bearded heads of himself, his colleague, L. Verus, and his son Commodus, are almost invariably modern, and

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\* The Cinque-Cento engravers must have thought this quality the most important in the antique style, for they exaggerated it to such a degree as often to obliterate by it all the lines of their figures, and one of the criteria of a Cinque-Cento gem is this very polishing out of all its effectiveness.

copied from the coins. Coming later down, we meet with numerous heads of Caracalla, for the most part in a much debased style, probably cut for the rings of the military, whose favour he lost no means of courting, according to the last injunctions of his father. After this date gem-portraits almost entirely disappear: they were superseded by the fashion of wearing the gold coins of the reigning emperor set in rings, or by a return to the primitive rude plan of cutting the device in the metal itself. On this account the green jasper, formerly in the Praun\* cabinet, was of especial interest, for it bears a Janus bust, with the heads of Diocletian and Maximian—unmistakable likenesses. Notwithstanding Constantine's† long tenure of empire and great popularity, only a single *intaglio* portrait of him, diademed, on amethyst, has come to my knowledge, and that only as quoted in Stosch's catalogue, and Lippert gives one well executed of his son of the same name. This proves the rapid extinction of *intaglio* engraving, for his reign produced many large and splendid works in cameo, and forms an epoch of the revival of that art. Caylus gives (iv. Pl. 76) a well-executed, youthful bust, long-haired, diademed, wearing the modius of Serapis, which he strangely attributes to Helena, Julian's wife, not remembering that such an ornament necessarily bespeaks a male personage.‡ The face is that of Julian when Cæsar, as he appears on his coins of that period, before he ventured, "*sapientem pascere barbam*," that outward and visible sign of heathenism in those times. He was especially addicted to the Egyptian religion, as he proved

\* In the same, classed amongst the unknown, I recognised a remarkable *intaglio* of the busts of Gallienus and Salonina, facing each other; three wheat-ears springing from each head, between them an altar supporting an eagle; the stone a good sard. Their singular ornament probably commemorates the restoration of Africa to that emperor, through the defeat of the usurper Celsus by his cousin Galliena. The Beverley Cabinet has Elagabalus and Annia Faustina, confronted busts, fairly done on a superb sard. The Blacas, the head of Maximian as a Hercules, boldly done.

† A letter of his is preserved by Constant. Porphyrogenitus, accompanying the gift to the Chersonite of "gold rings engraved with our own pious likenesses," as an acknowledgment of their services. The term would imply the head was cut in the metal, not on a gem, like the signet of Childeric.

‡ When an "Augusta" is similarly complimented, she assumes the lily, lotus of Isis his consort.



by boldly introducing its imagery upon his medals, when he had attained the supreme power.\* But incomparably the finest of these memorials is the portrait of Theodosius II. (408-450). He is represented exactly as on his solidi; the complete bust seen in front covered with *ring-mail*, and finished with extraordinary care; the face, also, is not without some individuality, a prodigy of art for those times—the best that they could produce, for the gem was undoubtedly the imperial signet. Moss-agate, a most *virtuous* stone (as Orpheus teaches), is thus honoured.

M. Montigny, Paris, possesses an intaglio portrait of Phocas, his bust in front-face, holding the orb, precisely as the type upon his solidi. The work is tolerable, and done in an oval lapis-lazuli,  $1 \times \frac{3}{4}$  inch in size.† In the late Praun cabinet was a large calcedony,  $2 \times 1\frac{1}{2}$  inches oval, presenting in a very fair style the bust in front face of his predecessor Mauritius, holding the orb, with the legend above, DN MAURITIUS PPA. This piece is stated in the catalogue to have been found at Gräfin, but it has a somewhat suspicious look about it, and may after all be nothing more than a work of the Renaissance. Of the gems of the Carlovingian kings,‡ remarkable as belonging to a date posterior by many centuries to that of the supposed extinction of the art in Europe, a full account will be found in my memoir upon mediæval gem-engraving. But it remains a fact, that after the middle of the third century portrait-gems are extremely rare, and to corroborate this observation, it may be stated that in the heterogeneous Hertz collection, got together with only one object, that of amassing the greatest possible variety of subjects without discrimination, I could discover no portraits later than the times of Severus.

\* In the same century the citizens of Antioch used to wear in their rings the portrait of their highly venerated bishop, Meletius, dep. A.D. 361, as Chrysostom mentions in his oration 'De laudibus Meletii.'

† Figured in the 'Rev. Archéol.' for 1858.

‡ Some of them hit upon the clever expedient of adopting an antique head somewhat resembling their own, for their signet, by adding their own titles around on the setting. Thus Pepin adopts an Indian Bacchus; Charlemagne, a Serapis; our Edgar, the fine portrait of some Greek prince. ('Handbook of Engraved Gems,' pp. 118, 143.)

After the revival of the art in Italy, the works of the Cinque-cento artists, though, as was to be expected, modelled upon the Roman antique, are generally stamped with that curious exaggeration which characterises all the other productions of that period—the majolica paintings, the ivory carvings, and the bronzes. The rare works of the very earliest artists in this line, belonging to the preceding century,\* and who sprung up under the patronage of Paul II., the Dukes of Milan, and, lastly, of the Medici, are to be distinguished from the above by their extreme stiffness and retention of the Gothic manner, in the same degree as the portraits by contemporary hands. The head-dress and the costume display the lingering Gothic fashion, rendered with the same fidelity as in the miniatures of the Quattro-cento school. In fact, all the examples of the dawning Revival known to me are portraits. They are in shallow intaglio, upon gems of large size, and appear to have been worked out in great measure by a method now forgotten. Nothing can be more dissimilar than their style, to the flowing, facile, over-polished productions of fifty years later, when constant imitation of the antique and infinite practice had freed both eye and hand from the trammels of Gothic conventionality.

With the regular school of the Cinque-cento in Italy, and its disciples of the Renaissance in France, Roman history, and Roman fable, particularly as set forth by Ovid, furnished the most popular subjects for the engraver. Few intagli, however, were produced in that age, compared with the multitudes of camei which, proceeding from this source, have stocked the cabinets of the world of taste.† This

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\* The first work of the Revival that can be certainly identified, is that quoted by Giulianelli, the bust of Pope Paul II. (1462), now at Florence; “*intagliata in una sardonica.*” It is by an excellent hand, supposed to be Paolo Giordano, described as a “*bravo legatore e pulitore di gioie.*”

† One of the most remarkable and characteristic productions of this school is a Triton carrying a nymph (Rhodes), unmistakably a transcript from Albert Durer’s “*Lurley Saga.*” The engravings of the whimsical German had been made popular in Italy by Marcantonio’s piracy of them. These figures are in such high relief as to be in parts detached from the field; their finish is miraculous, and all the details of the scenery are put in with microscopic minuteness. Nothing can be imagined more completely the reverse of the antique manner in every point.



school, however, was eminent for one class of intagli peculiar to itself, both as to material and dimensions, subjects and mode of treatment. These are the plaques of rock-crystal, works upon which the fame of Valerio Il Vicentino, Bernardi del Castel Bolognese, and Matteo del Nassaro, is principally founded. In this stone, for some unknown reason, *antique* intagli are scarcely to be found, although the material was so extensively worked up by the Romans for other purposes. The dimensions also of these pieces far exceed the customary limits of the antique for intaglio work, the plaques being squares or ovals of four or six inches in width; in fact, the artist's object evidently was to obtain as large a surface as possible, the only limit being the dimensions of the block. As they were designed entirely for show in large medallions worn in the hat, or pendent, or composing the sides of coffrets, or of large vases in the precious metals, such an extent of field was absolutely necessary, in order to prevent the unsightly introduction of metal joinings. Their subjects are very various, and bespeak the strange *mélange* of religious notions then prevailing, when the mediæval and the newly resuscitated mythology were perpetually jostling one another in the domains of art. Some are directly scriptural, others emblematical, such as Il Vicentino's "Old and New Covenant," expressed by classical figures; or the "Meeting of Alexander with the High Priest." Again, the ancient deities often reappear, especially those rulers of the age, Venus and Hercules. A few are historical, like Bernardi's "Siege of Bastia;" others, like M. Angelo's "Tityus and the Vulture,"\* mere fancy pieces, battles, and lion hunts. In composition and in drawing these works are truly admirable, though totally different from the antique manner in many points, such as the large number of figures introduced to fill every available space, and the violent action and display of anatomy and floating drapery, forced in for the mere purpose of animating the piece. The intaglio is shallow, and polished internally to an extraordinary

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\* Now in the Blacas Cabinet; an oval  $3 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$  inches, set in a gold frame for a pendent-jewel.

degree of lustre. In fact, as just observed, in many gems of this age this excessive polish will be found to have destroyed all sharpness of outline, and impaired the drawing. These plaques in use were laid upon richly-coloured silks, with the engravings *inwards*, so as to produce, by a singular illusion, the effect of works in relief, in consequence of the varying thickness of the refractive medium. The thinnest parts, allowing the most of the colour behind to pass through them, appear at first sight actually to stand out from the field.

It is now very uncommon to meet with one of these crystal plaques still retaining its original setting, and thus showing how it was properly intended to be shown. Their rarity is due to the large intrinsic value of such mountings, which has occasioned their destruction in the interval. One still complete lately came under my notice (Eastwood, 1863), of octagonal shape, subject, a youthful saint holding the host and a laurel branch, in a most costly frame of gold filigree, very broad and heavy, and ornamented at intervals with oblong table sapphires. Having a loop for suspension, it must have been intended to be worn as a medallion.

Of the intagli upon other species of gems belonging to this school there are some particularly fine examples in the Marlborough cabinet, as the Ariadne rescued by Bacchus and his train. But the most interesting, historically, of the whole class, is the large oval agate, mounted as a pendant, presented by Archbishop Parker to Queen Elizabeth. The subject is Vulcan seated at his anvil, with Venus standing by, who despatches Cupid on some errand, bearing a flaming torch. This gem is preserved in the original ivory box, accompanied with a parchment, setting forth the physical virtues of the agate, with this distich—

“Regni ἄχθς Elizabetha gerit, Mattheus achatem  
Cantua, ei donat fidus dum vivit Achates;”

where the good prelate, it will be seen, has, for the pun's sake, been obliged to strike the  $\theta$  out of ἄχθος. Now as he was made archbishop in 1559, his present must have been subsequent to that date.

In the biographical section, it will be shown how and when the



antique mode of intaglio engraving was in some measure rediscovered (from hints given by that great collector, Stosch) by Flavio Sirletti, at the beginning of the last century. By him and his successors a host of intagli have been left, many comparable to the best of the ancients, yet for the most part carrying with them the visible stamp of their age, especially in the treatment of the drapery, which enables the experienced eye to assign to them their proper origin.\* Besides this, the most eminent artists, such as Natter and Pichler, aspired to a higher fame than that of mere copyists of antiquity. After attaining to celebrity, they both always *signed* their own works; and, indeed, Pichler struck out a peculiar style, widely differing from the Greek, although perhaps of equal merit. Some, however, of his pupils became close imitators of the Greek, as exhibited in the *Magna Græcian* medals, and I have seen intagli by Rega of Naples, the first in that line, as a head of Ariadne, on an unusually large scale, and the "Despair of Ajax;" and again in cameo, a Proserpine, and the Rape of the Palladium, by Girometti, which equal, if they do not surpass, anything left to us by the ancients in either department.

\* Of this they were sensible. The late J. Brett informed me, on the authority of Mr. Constable ('Walter Scott's *Antiquary*'), who had resided in Rome during the most flourishing times of the modern art, that the engravers spared no pains in procuring antique pastes offering new subjects. These they accurately copied, afterwards destroying the originals, securing in this way the true antique treatment of the subjects they reproduced.





#### THE PORTRAITURE OF THE ANCIENTS.

ONE of the most tantalising peculiarities belonging to the study of antique gems is the existence of that innumerable series, thrown together at the end of every catalogue under the designation of "Unknown Portraits." What can be more trying to one versed in ancient history than to possess some impress of a face full of life and individuality, to be morally conscious that he has therein the "counterfeit presentment" of some great philosopher, statesman, or warrior, and after all, to be obliged to content himself, at best, with the arbitrary ascriptions of Fulvius Ursinus, Leon Agostini, Gori, and Visconti—ascriptions based, for the most part, upon the fancied agreement of the features with those of some restored, almost equally unreliable, bust or statue? Where the assistance of medals fails us, we indeed have no other resource than this; and even this poor resource labours under another disadvantage; sculpture, when reproduced by drawing, losing so much of its character, that the marbles or bronzes are of little real service to our purpose unless we be enabled to examine the originals for ourselves, and compare them with the miniature heads we are endeavouring to identify. Visconti, in his two



*Iconographies*, has availed himself only to a very limited extent of engraved gems in order to complete his series of Greek and Roman portraits, being probably deterred by the consideration that a mere *supposed* resemblance, when unsupported by an inscription, was insufficient warranty for their admission amongst likenesses in the authenticity of which his own archaeological credit was involved. It is however possible, that had the acute Italian more attentively studied these minuter, but far more perfect, memorials of ancient celebrities, he might have conscientiously augmented his muster-roll, and that to a very considerable extent.

It was for posterity an unfortunate impulse of the pride of art, that made the Roman engravers think it beneath them to continue the practice of their Etruscan predecessors (who carefully subjoined his name to every hero they portrayed), but rather to trust to fidelity of portraiture for the sufficient declaration of their subjects. As far as regards the personages of mythology, they did not often err in this estimate of their own powers; for in that province all the types had been fixed for them by immemorial tradition. Plutarch (*Aratus*) mentions some curious facts, proving incidentally how familiar the aspect of their most ancient celebrities had been rendered to the Greeks by their repeated representations in every form of art. Thus, Nicocles, tyrant of Sicyon, was the exact image of Periander, one of the Seven Wise Men; Orontas the Persian, of Alcmaeon; and a certain young Lacedaemonian, of Hector. To the last-named this discovered resemblance proved fatal, he being crushed to death by the multitudes who flocked to see him as soon as it was made known.

But in the case of ordinary mortals, no amount of skill in the artist could preserve to his work the possibility of recognition after all remembrance of the deceased original had passed away together with his contemporaries. And, by an unlucky coincidence, it was precisely at the date when portraits from the life first began to appear upon gems, that the old explanatory legends were discontinued—a circumstance that has robbed of its chief value what otherwise would have been by far the most interesting department of every gem-cabinet.

The engraver remained satisfied with having by his skill ensured the recognition of his patron amongst contemporaries; nevertheless it is inconceivable how he should have neglected so easy and obvious a method for immortalising him amongst the educated for all succeeding time. Such a precaution he has actually taken for the continuance of his own posthumous fame, in the case of his principal works, by adding his *signature*; but this very care has, in some instances, only served to mislead posterity (as in Solon's case), by making us attribute to some celebrated namesake of the artist's in Grecian history, the actual personality of his Roman employer.

In other cases, when a name *does* accompany a likeness, it often proves no more than a client's or freedman's, paying thus his homage to the grandee really represented there—a species of adulatory deification borrowed from the very ancient custom of joining one's own name to the figure of the patron-god upon the signet. But most frequently of all, alas! when the inscription does professedly designate the subject (if a noted historical character), it is easily detected as a mere clumsy interpolation by a modern hand, made in order to give value to an unknown head, in the same way as busts of private Romans were commonly, during the same period, inscribed by their finders with the titles of the most eminent sons of Greece.

How important, how intensely interesting, the class of gem-portraits would now be to us had the slightest means of identification been generally supplied by their authors, is a thought that must strike every one who considers the immense number still extant, the conscientious diligence displayed in their execution by the highest ability in that branch of art; and last, but not least, the ample means at the artist's command for ensuring fidelity in his reproduction even of long departed worthies, when representing them at the order of their descendants or admirers. Throughout Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, every town had its temples, gymnasium, agora, or forum, peopled with the statues, in all materials, of those amongst her sons who had in any way distinguished themselves in arms, letters, or the public games; and as civilization advanced, popular adulation or private vanity



swelled their hosts to an extent perfectly inconceivable to our notions, often by the mere multiplication of the same figure.

Plutarch notices, as a remarkable exception to the general rule, in the case of Agesilaus, the absence of all portraits or statues of so eminent a man; for he would not allow any to be taken in his lifetime—nay, more, upon his death-bed actually forbade it to his survivors. The antiquity of the practice appears from the same historian's notice of the statue of Themistocles he had admired, standing in the temple of Athene *Aristobule*, both statue and temple erected by the great statesman, describing it as "of an aspect as heroic as his actions." Alexander, on entering Phaselis, in his Persian campaign, was delighted to find the statue of his favourite poet, the lately deceased tragedian, Theodectes, newly set up by his fellow-townsmen, and testified his gratitude by crowning it with garlands. On entering Persepolis as victor, he sees a colossus of Xerxes thrown down by the rush of fugitives, and debates upon the propriety of re-erecting the same, but finally decides to leave the figure prostrate, as a punishment for the impiety of its original when in Greece. Such memorials, still preserved in Plutarch's times, went back to the remotest antiquity: he speaks of a statue of Orpheus in cypress-wood then existing at Lebethæa, in Thrace. Lysander, with his confederate generals, his own offering in gratitude for the termination of the Peloponnesian War, was still standing in marble in the Treasury of the Corinthians at Delphi.

These dedicated groups often represented some noteworthy event in the hero's life. Craterus sends to the same temple a work by Lysippus of Alexander attacking a lion with his hounds, and himself hastening to his aid. Philopœmen, "last of the Greeks," dedicates there his own equestrian figure, in the act of spearing the Spartan tyrant, Mæchanidas. Aratus destroys the portraits of the line of Sicyonian tyrants. Amongst them was that of Aristostratus, standing in a chariot and crowned by Victory, the joint work of all the scholars of Melanthius, including the great Apelles. Nealces, himself an admired painter, is employed to efface the tyrant's figure, which he replaces by a palm-tree. The first proceeding of the Macedonian king,

Antigonus Doson, when master of Sicyon, is to set up again the statues of these tyrants, whence it must be concluded that Aratus had not actually destroyed, but only removed them from their posts of honour in the public place. Public gratitude gave additional stimulus to artistic energy. Down to Plutarch's age those very early masters, Silanion and Parrhasius, were honoured with annual sacrifices by the Athenians for their successful statues and pictures of the national hero, Theseus. A laughable example of cheap honour to a public benefactor is afforded by the lately discovered Sestine Inscription, which, after enrolling the vote of a bronze statue to a great local patriot, one Menas, goes on to declare that the resolution being delayed through want of funds, Menas had added yet this above all to his other enumerated services, that he had set up the statue at his own expense.

To illustrate the unlimited multiplication of such honours, a few examples, taken at random, will more than suffice. Demetrius Phalereus, governor of Athens for Demetrius Poliorcetes, was complimented by that time-serving community with a bronze statue for every day in the year. At Rome, and in yet uncorrupt republican times, Marius Gratidianus, on account of his verification of the silver currency, obtained, from the gratitude of his fellow-citizens, a similar honour placed in *every* street of the city. Pausanias beheld the consecrated ground, no less than half a mile in circuit, crowded with those of Hadrian alone, all congregated round his grand work, the Olympæum at Athens. Their number may be estimated from the fact, that every town pretending to be an Athenian colony had sent thither one in its own name; the parent state, as was right and proper, outdoing them all by a *colossus* of her imperial second founder placed in the rear of the shrine. Doubtless that benefactor had, underhand, supplied the funds for so costly a memorial; for the just-quoted example of Menas informs us that a man's subscribing money to his own glorification is far from being the invention of our own day. For, the making a colossus, even in those ages of superabundant artistic power, swallowed up the revenue of a Grecian state. The Apollo of the Pontic town bearing his name, thirty cubits in height, had cost no less



than five hundred talents (100,000*l.*); the more celebrated one at Rhodes, seventy cubits high, required the outlay of three hundred (60,000*l.*);\* the Mercury of Auvergne, made by Zenodorus, the dimensions of which Pliny does not give, stating only that they exceeded those of Nero's by the same statuary (110 feet),—"omnem amplitudinem ejus generis vicit"—cost the equivalent of 400,000*l.* [CCCC], and required ten years for its completion.†

The rage for colossus-making flourished down to the last days of art. Gallienus had commenced one to his own honour on a scale preposterously exceeding even the extravagance of Nero's ambition, for the shaft of the spear held in the emperor's hand contained a winding stair by which a man might mount to the top. Another remarkable example is the marble colossi of the imperial brothers, Tacitus and Florian, placed over their *cenotaph* at Terni, in the centre of their paternal estate, and which, when Vopiscus wrote, were lying on the ground, shattered and cast down by a recent earthquake. And lastly the insane ambition of the miserly Anastasius thus to indulge his vanity, but at as cheap a rate as possible, led to the destruction of a whole street full of monuments of better times, all cast into the furnace to supply the requisite metal.‡

But to return to the regular class of these memorials, as showing the long perpetuation of the practice. Ammian notices such as raised by Constantius II. in the grand square at Amida, to commemorate certain officers who had fallen victims to the perfidy of the Persian, Sapor; and again, Julian's conferring the same distinction upon Victor, the historian.§ From the terms in which Nicetas speaks of the statues of victorious charioteers adorning the Hippodrome at

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\* This great disproportion in cost, as compared with the former, is explained by its material being furnished from the siege-train of Demetrius Poliorcetes, abandoned by him in his flight from the island.

† xxxiv. 18.

‡ The sole survivor of the class is the "Colosso di Barletta" of Theodosius, 19½ palmi = 15 feet Roman in height. Said to have been brought from Constantinople by the Venetians, and the ship carrying it wrecked off Barletta.

§ xxi. 10. 5.

Constantinople down to the year A.D. 1204 (when they were all melted down by the Franks on the capture of the city), it would appear that these popular heroes continued to be thus perpetuated in bronze so long as the circus-races themselves were maintained.

Plutarch has preserved a good saying of old Cato the Censor's, *apropos* of the multiplication of such memorials by every one that chose to pay for the gratification of his vanity. Many people of small note having statues set up to them in Rome, and himself none at all, notwithstanding his services to the State, Cato, on this being observed to him, replied, that "he very much preferred it should be asked why he had *not* a statue than why he had one." This neglect, however, was subsequently rectified, for Plutarch had seen a bronze statue of him in the character of Censor, standing in the temple of Salus. Again, some faint idea of their incredible numerousness is given by the casual notices of the swarms so long remaining in Greece for many generations after that country had become the favourite foraging-ground of every Roman amateur who possessed authority to plunder—like Nero, who made a *selection* of five hundred bronze statues "of gods and men indiscriminately" out of those at Delphi alone.\* Nevertheless, the learned Mucianus calculated that at the time of his tour in Greece, a few years later, there were still remaining three thousand statues in Rhodes singly, and an equal number at Athens, Olympia, and Delphi respectively. But what the pillage had been under the earlier Roman domination may be imagined from a single fact. Scaurus, Sylla's stepson, had that very same number employed in the decoration of his temporary wooden theatre. But, in truth, the fecundity of Greek genius had been absolutely miraculous; Lysippus alone having executed fifteen hundred statues, some of them colossal, and every one of them perfect in its kind. The Greeks, however, had the less right to complain of this Roman spoliation, having themselves set the example of the licence in this lust given by victory; Cleomenes, on capturing Megalopolis, sending off all the statues and pictures he found

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\* Pausan., x. 7. 1.



says of Piso, "crept into honours through the recommendation of smoke-dried ancestors, whom they resembled in nothing save in their complexion."

Nothing resists the action of time so effectually as modelling wax, if only protected from pressure, a proof of which is afforded by regal seals (of the same composition) preserved from early Norman, and even Carolingian reigns. The enduring nature of these memorials has lately received a yet more remarkable attestation. A large tomb at Cumæ, opened towards the close of the year 1852 by the Conte di Siracusa, contained, besides several cinerary urns, three biers of stone upon which were extended four skeletons, each deprived of the head, hands, and feet. Two of these bodies had been supplied with heads in wax, having eyes of paste, male and female. The latter head fell to pieces when touched, but the other was fortunately sufficiently sound to admit of being removed, in perfect condition, to the Museum, at least as far as regards the face. This face is that of a man of middle age, of good features, a slightly aquiline nose, and somewhat plump, having the beard close shaven, and the hair of the head cut short. A very interesting circumstance about it is that a slight distortion of the nostrils and lips proves to a practised eye that the plaster mould in which the mask was cast must have been taken from the face during life. It is evident that the man, his wife, and their two companions in death had suffered execution and mutilation at one and the same time, and that the trunks of the two principal victims had been thus completed through the pious care of friends, when committed to the family sepulchre—the extremities being reserved by the executioner for public exhibition, upon spikes fixed in some elevated position. The casts may, therefore, be supposed taken when the condemned lay in prison awaiting their doom. Inasmuch as a coin of Diocletian was found in the same tomb, it was a natural conclusion for the discoverers to arrive at that these decapitated bodies belonged to real Christian martyrs. The mask is well figured in the 'Mus. Borbon,' xv. pl. 54. Hence these *imagines* preserved unchanged the personal appearance of the Roman's ancestors for many generations

back. For this reason we may accept with all confidence the portraits of Brutus the Elder, Ahala, Metellus, Scipio Africanus, &c., upon the consular denarii, or upon gems, although such may only date from the last two centuries of the Republic. At the obsequies of any person of a patrician family, these *heads* were affixed to figures clad in the official costume appropriated to the former condition in life of each person; and these effigies, so completed, followed in long procession the last departed member of their line as far as the *Rostra* in the Forum, where the next of kin delivered a funeral oration in his honour, recapitulating, with the merits and exploits of the individual, all the traditionary glories of his *gens*. A good idea of the remote antiquity to which these memorials were carried back may be derived from Tacitus's allusion to the interminable line of *imagines* which graced the funeral of Drusus, only son of the Emperor Tiberius. Beginning with Æneas, they went through the series of the Alban kings, then Attus Clausus and the Sabine nobility, finishing with the unbroken succession of the Claudian race.\*

In addition to these private stores of portraits, from their very nature the most authentic that could be desired, Pliny often refers to another class, to which a passing allusion has been made above. These were the host of statues, or rather *statuettes*; a half life-size, *tripedanea*, being (as he remarks in the case of those erected to the murdered envoys, Julius and Coruncanus, B.C. 231) considered in early times as something out of the common for such monuments. Beginning with the Kings of Rome, they illustrated each successive period of her history until they culminated in the grander works springing out of the vanity and ambition of the last ages of the Republic, and the commencement of the Empire.

The extreme antiquity of the custom is manifest from Pliny's mention of the statues of the Kings, which he quotes as authorities

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\* This *convoy* of ancestors is what Cornelia means in the forced expression of Propertius,—

" Sum digna merendo  
Cujus honoratis ossa vehantur avis."



on a point of costume, a proof of the care bestowed upon their execution. The very nature of the case proves these statues to have been works of the period they commemorated; it being absurd to suppose that the early or late Republic should have erected statues in honour of a detested government, the very name whereof was synonymous with *tyranny*; although even such hatred had been forced to spare these original monuments, as being sacred things, the property of Jupiter of the Capitol. Of their style of execution a good notion may be formed from the heads of Romulus, Sabinus, Numa, and Ancus, on the denarii, struck late in the Republic by families claiming descent from this ancient stock—portraits testifying to an experienced eye, by their peculiar style, that they were true copies of Archaic originals. Stiff in the extreme, they were none the less true to nature, as the sole surviving relic of their school, the Wolf of the Capitol, strikingly declares. Another, and a curious proof of the correct individuality secured to his portraits by the Regal brass-founder, lies in the circumstance Plutarch records, respecting the statue of Brutus the Elder, holding a naked sword, and “then standing amongst the Kings in the Capitol.” In the features, Posidonius the philosopher declared he could trace a strong family likeness to his celebrated namesake and imitator. But of the statue of the contemporary Porsenna, then existing in the Senate-house, he remarks that the style was rude and Archaic: a good testimony to its genuineness.

To cite a few illustrations of the fecundity of the national Italian school in ages long preceding the date when

“Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes  
Intulit agresti Latio:”

Pliny mentions that the statue which Spurius Cassius (who was put to death for treason B.C. 485) had *erected to himself*, long suffered to stand behind the temple of Tellus, was finally melted down by order of the censors, Scipio and Popilius, at the same time that they *removed* (not *destroyed*) out of the Forum all statues of persons that had borne office which had not been authorized by public decree to enjoy that honour. This cruel onslaught upon a harmless gratification of vanity

took place in the year B.C. 159. Again, to quote Pliny's own words: "I would have supposed the *three* figures of the Sibyl, with that of Attus Nævius made by Servius Tullius's order, to be the most ancient works in Rome, were it not for the statues of the Kings which stand in the Capitol." As early as the date B.C. 495, Appius Claudius, when consul, set up all his ancestry, with their titles underneath, in the temple of Bellona. By a proud generosity Rome preserved the memorials of even her bitterest enemies—a gold *clypeus* embossed with the bust of Hasdrubal (captured by Marius in Spain) was fixed over the portal of the Capitol. Of Hannibal himself no fewer than three statues were objects of interest (*visuntur*) to the historian's contemporaries; whilst the colossal Baal of Carthage, propitiated of old with human victims, stood by neglected in the open air. And further, these honours were paid to the memory of the illustrious dead even under circumstances that one might fancy would have precluded them; but it appears the victorious side had sufficient magnanimity to concede this innocuous consolation to the vanquished. For example, Plutarch had admired the statue of the younger Cato standing, sword in hand (like his predecessor of old) upon the Utican shore, marking the site of his funeral pile; probably erected by the townsmen, who are mentioned as having celebrated the patriot's obsequies with the greatest respect, regardless of all consequences to themselves from the displeasure of the conqueror.

The source, therefore, being so astonishingly copious, it was only natural the Roman gem-engravers should avail themselves thereof, and that they did so to the full is manifested by the present abundance of antique portrait gems. That so small a proportion of their number has been identified, is partly due to the negligence of gem-collectors in not studying ancient sculpture with that view, or, better than all, the portraits on the consular coinage. The latter means, judiciously applied, often leads to the recognition of the great personages of the Republic, immortalised by history, and now recalled to life for us by the manifestation of their countenances upon the signets of their next descendants.



But the same study opens out a far more extensive field than the range of Roman history. Of the Grecian *philosophers*, the gem-portraits, though seldom contemporary (for reasons I have sufficiently discussed in another place), must by no means be regarded on that account as mere creations of the artist's fancy, drawn in accordance with the popular conception of the character of each. A host of statuaries are catalogued by Pliny, beginning with Colotes, the partner of Phidias, such as Androbulus, Apollodorus, Alevas, Cephisodorus, &c., all distinguished for making the portraiture of philosophers their special walk in their profession; or else like Chalcosthenes, devoting themselves exclusively to the sculpturing of athletes and charioteers. As all these (besides many more named by Pliny) principally occupied themselves in thus perpetuating the outward forms of the numerous *literati* of their respective generations, the series of authentic likenesses in this class ascended considerably beyond the period of Plato, although probably somewhat idealised before the invention of Lysistratus already noticed. During the disasters of the Samnite War (B.C. 343) the statues of Pythagoras and Alcibiades were set up in Rome by the Senate, when ordered by the Delphic Oracle to pay this honour "to the wisest and to the bravest of the Greeks." Pliny is surprised at these particular two being preferred to Socrates and Themistocles; but as far as regards the Samian sage, the Romans found good reason in the tradition that made him to have been enrolled a citizen of the infant state, nay, the actual preceptor of Numa: his son Mamercus was claimed by the Æmiliî as the founder of their family. Of the first of these two bronzes the appearance is preserved to us by a *contorniato* medal; the philosopher was seated in his chair in the attitude of meditation, his head resting on his hand.

These likenesses were prodigiously multiplied so long as the study of philosophy continued in fashion at Rome, that is, during the first three centuries of the empire. Pliny\* notices the "modern invention" of placing in libraries the figures of learned men, made of gold, silver,

\* XXXV. 2.

or at poorest of bronze ("aut certe ex ære"), which he attributes either to Asinius Pollio, who first established a public library at Rome, or else to the royal founders of those at Pergamus and Alexandria. Juvenal laughs at the swarms of impudent pretenders to the title of philosopher who usurped that dignified name on the strength of having their rooms crowded with plaster busts of Chrysippus, and who regarded themselves as quite perfected by the purchase of a good Aristotle or Pittacus, or a contemporary head of Cleanthes, to decorate their bookcase.\*

That the followers of the different schools displayed in their signets the heads of their respective founders, would readily be supposed from the nature of circumstances; and this supposition is converted into certainty by Cicero's laughing at the Epicureans amongst his friends for carrying about with them their master's portrait in their table plate, and in their rings.† And a century later, Pliny mentions the fondness of the same sect for setting up his portrait in their rooms, and carrying it about with them whithersoever they went.‡ Such a practice accounts for the frequency of the heads of Socrates on gems of the Roman period; for none perhaps are to be met with whose style approaches more closely to the epoch of the Athenian sage. *Plato* likewise makes his appearance on the same medium as his master, but to far less extent than collectors flatter themselves in their hope of so interesting a possession, for his grave and regular physiognomy is usually confounded with the established type of the Indian *Bacchus*. *Aristotle*, too, in his well-known attitude of meditation, with chin resting on his clenched hand, is occasionally to be seen on really antique gems, though with infinitely more frequency on those of the Cinque-cento school. *Diogenes*, ensconced within his capacious *dolium* (oil-jar), was a much more fashionable device in times whose extravagant luxury had made the affectation of asceticism the favourite cloak for ambition and knavery.

\* In the Epicurean's library at Herculaneum were found bronze busts of Epicurus, Hermarchus, Metrodorus, Demosthenes, and Zeno—beautiful works of art.

† 'De Fin.' v. 1.

‡ xxxiv. 1.



The order of *Poets* is likewise as fully commemorated by our glyptic monuments. Their distinctive badge is the *vitta* surrounding the head, a thin ribbon tied more loosely than the broader diadem of Grecian royalty. This only applies to the great lights of Hellenic literature, for their Roman successors assumed crowns more befitting the character of their muse. Ovid bids his friend at home strip from his brows the Bacchic ivy-wreath so ill suited to the sad estate of an exile:—

“ Siquis habes nostros similes in imagine vultus  
Deme meis hederas, Bacchica sarta, comis;  
Ista decent latos felicia signa poetas,  
Temporibus non est apta corona meis.” \*

But of such portraits, with the exception of Homer's well-known features (though but a fancy portrait, as Pliny himself confesses); *Æschylus*, recognisable by his tortoise capping his bald pate; and *Sappho*, by her Lesbian head-cloth,—the attribution of such likenesses is a matter of great uncertainty. This circumstance is much to be regretted, since authentic portraits, so long as the possibility of recognition survived, went back to the very day-spring of art. Plutarch mentions how that Phidias himself got into very great trouble—nay, even endangered his life—by introducing his own figure in the Battle of the Amazons, chased upon the shield of his colossal Minerva, in the guise of a bald-headed old man lifting up a stone; and likewise records how Themistocles rallied the poet Simonides for having his portrait painted, he being of most unsightly aspect.

The absence of all distinguishing symbols is fatal to the recognition of the two great rivals of *Æschylus*, although it were but reasonable to seek for them amongst the same class of memorials. In fact, Visconti has published a cameo representing an aged man enveloped in the *pallium*, whom a female is presenting to a seated Muse; and supposes that this protégé of Melpomene's has a head much resembling the portrait bust of Euripides found at Herculaneum. The subject he ingeniously interprets as the Muse receiving the Poet from the hands

\* “Trist.” l. 7.

† Pariant desideria non traditos vultus sicut in Homero evenit.

of *Palæstra*, daughter of *Hercules*, in allusion to his original occupation of athlete. It is certain that this was the established type for commemorating a successful dramatist. The fine Marlborough gem, No. 393, exhibits a youth holding, to mark his profession, the *pedum* of *Thalia*, engaged in conference with the Comic Muse, who is seated in precisely the same attitude as *Palæstra* in Visconti's cameo. And what confirms this explanation, the pair of Bernay silver vases (in the Bibliothèque Impériale), with chasings of Alexander's epoch, give the same design with unimportant variations; the *thymele* (theatrical altar) being introduced between each pair of interlocutors, as a symbol, intended plainly to declare that some dramatic celebrity was taken by the ancient *toreutes* for his theme.

To this perplexing uncertainty, however, there is one fortunate and remarkable exception in the *Lucretius*, on black agate (formerly Dr. Nott's), inscribed *LVCRE* in the lettering of his own times; accepted by the infallibility of the Roman Archæological Institute, and K. O. Müller, as the unquestionable *vera* effigies of the poet-philosopher. *Virgil's* likeness, however, 'although beyond all doubt it *must* exist on gems, and on not a few of them too, has hitherto imitated the notorious bashfulness of its original, and shrunk from our recognition. But the anxious longing of the early Italian scholars has imposed upon the world two supposititious heads of strangely differing type; one, that of a Muse with flowing bay-crowned locks (which, therefore, graces the title-page of Heyne's beautiful edition of the poet); the other Apollo's, with short crisp curls, in the Archaic style, perhaps taken from the Etruscan Colossus, standing, when Pliny wrote, in the Palatine Library; and the very one put by the Calpurnian family upon their denarii. And yet Virgil's face must have been as familiar to the Romans as Shakspeare's is to us; for with them, too, the author's portrait formed the regular frontispiece to his works, as Martial tells us in this very instance:—

"Quam brevis immensum cepit membrana Maronem!  
Ipsius vultus prima tabella gerit." \*

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\* xiv. 186.



But, in reality, we are not left in doubt as to Virgil's personal appearance. The 'Codex Romanus,' written probably in the fourth century, actually gives a full-length figure of the poet, which has every mark of genuineness about it. He is seated in front-face, closely wrapped in his toga, at his desk, a *capsa* of books by his side; he is close shaved, and his hair cropped short, his face long and thin; and, so far as the smallness of the drawing permits to judge, with a general resemblance to the portrait of Augustus. Of one thing we may be certain, that the great poet, the most modest of men, would have avoided nothing so much as any conspicuous deviation from the fashion of his own times.

Martial thanks Stertinius Avitus for placing his bust (*imago*) within his library, and sends him an appropriate inscription to be put under it. In another place he speaks of his own portrait as being then painted as a present for Cæcilius Secundus, then commanding the army on the Danube.\*

The portrait of Horace, equally to be expected amongst these relics, has hitherto evaded all research,—perhaps as completely as that of his great contemporary. But the lucky finder will in this case have the advantage of being able to verify his discovery by comparing it with the poet's head upon the *contorniato* bearing his name. Although this medal belongs to the period of the Decline, the head has clearly been copied from some authentic original, such as the statue erected in the forum of his native town. This test the Blacas gem, unanimously accepted for a Horace in virtue of the bay branch and the initial *H* in the field, does not endure in an altogether satisfactory manner. By the aid of these medals, which have lately proved their own authenticity and source, by serving to identify in the most convincing manner a newly discovered statue of Terence, the gem-portraits of the same poet, of Sallust, Apollonius Tyaneus, and Apuleius, may possibly be hereafter recovered by some sagacious and fortunate collector.

Our invaluable authority for all the details of Roman life, Martial,

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\* ix. 1, and vii. 84.

when celebrating the philosophic poetess, *Theophila*, betrothed to his friend Canius, seems to have penned his epigram\* for the purpose of accompanying a portrait of the lady, as it begins with—

“Hæc est illa tibi promissa Theophila, Cani,  
Cujus Cœcopia pectora voce madent.”

I am strongly tempted to recognise this ancient blue-stocking in a female figure, nude, in character of Venus, but with hair dressed in that very peculiar fashion first set by Domitian’s empress, inscribed very conspicuously ΘΕΟΦΙΛΑ, which is engraved upon a plasma formerly belonging to the Praun Cabinet.

The practice of rewarding poetic eminence with a statue (Christodorus, flourishing under the Byzantine Anastasius, extols one of Virgil amongst those of early Greece, decorating the Gymnasium of Zeuxippus) was perpetuated down to the last days of the Western Empire. Claudian was thus honoured by Honorius, and with the superadded compliment of the extravagant inscription:—

Ἐν ἐν Βιργιλίῳ νόον καὶ Μοῦσαν Ὀμήρου  
Κλαυδιανὸν δῆμος καὶ βασιλεῖς ἔθεσαν.

That the popular poets of the day, besides these sculptural honours, received also from their admirers the less ostentatious but more imperishable distinction of portraiture in gems, is made matter of certainty by Ovid’s pathetic remonstrance, which follows the lines already quoted:—

“Hæc tibi dissimulas, sentis tamen Optime dici,  
In digito qui me fersque refersque tuo,  
Effigiemque meam fulvo complexus in auro  
Cara relegati quæ potes ora vides!  
Quæ quoties spectas suberit tibi dicere forsan  
Quam procul a nobis Naso sodalis abest!”

A thing hitherto unnoticed, but bearing very directly upon our subject, is the practice mentioned by Statius in his Ode on the Birthday of the poet Lucan. He informs us that it was then the fashion to



honour a departed friend by sculpturing his portrait in the character of a Bacchus :—

“ Hæc te non thyasis procax dolosis  
Falsa numinis induit figura :  
Ipsam sed colit et frequentat ipsam ;”

alluding to the golden bust of the poet placed by his widow, Polla, over her bed as a protecting genius. The disguise of Bacchus was probably chosen for these memorials, because that god was the great establisher of the Mysteries, initiation into which stood the departed soul in such good stead in the world to come. It is not surprising that Bacchic impersonations should have been so popular when, long before, we find Ptolemy Philopator spending all his time, when sober, in celebrating his Mysteries and beating a tambourine about the palace.\* A memorable record of this fashion has come down to us in that masterpiece of Roman sculpture, the colossal Antinous of the Lateran Gallery, with ivy-crowned though pensive head, the veritable god of wine in all but its expression of deep thoughtfulness. This belief is furthermore exemplified by a large and beautiful gem (a nicolo in the Heywood-Hawkins Cabinet), with an *intaglio* bust of the same imperial favourite, whose deification is declared by the thyrsus inserted in the field, and still further by the composition, in *cameo*, surrounding the portrait like a frame. On each side stands a Bacchante, one clashing the cymbals, the other waving a torch; at the top reclines a Cupid, at the bottom a Satyr; all these figures being combined into one design of uncommon elegance and masterly execution.† From all this it is allowable to conjecture that the heads of Bacchus and Ariadne, in which the Roman glyptic art so conspicuously and so lavishly has displayed itself, may not in every instance be *ideal*, but, on the contrary, may often perpetuate the features of the deceased friends of the persons who caused them to be engraved.

Atticus was so great a lover of portraits, that he took the trouble

\* Plutarch, ‘Cleomenes.’

† This gem was first published by Millin in his ‘*Pierres Gravées inédites*,’ and thence republished by Inghirami, ‘*Monumenti*,’ &c.

to compose a work on the subject. Had it survived to our times, nothing in Roman literature would have been so full of interest. Varro, actuated by a similar predilection, *invented* some method of multiplying portraits both expeditiously and cheaply; for he published a collection in one volume of seven hundred heads, under the title of 'Imagines Virorum Illustrium,' each accompanied with an explanatory distich in hendecasyllabic verse, of which a single specimen only is preserved, the one relating to Demetrius Phalereus:—

"Hic Demetrius ancis tot aptus est  
Quot lucas habet annus absolutus."

But, by a negligence infinitely to be regretted, Pliny has not thought it worth his while to explain the nature of this interesting invention. Nevertheless, his expressions, "benignissimo invento," and "aliquo modo insertas," are much too strong to be understood merely as relating to the obvious and long-established process of drawing such portraits by *hand*. A false reading of *n* for *u* in another passage of Pliny's has called into existence a lady artist, to whose pencil Varro should have been indebted for his supply of drawings, in the person of Lala of Cysicus, "quæ M. Varronis inventa pinxit." But Jan, by restoring the true reading, "*juventa*," remorselessly reduces her to a mere miniature painter, who was practising her art with much success at Rome during the younger days of the great antiquary.

But to return to Pliny's significant expression, "*aliquo modo*;" the words strike my mind as implying some *mechanical* contrivance for effecting the purpose expeditiously and without variation. It is hardly possible to conceive the same portrait to be copied over many hundred times, and by different hands, in the *atelier* of the Roman *librarius*, and still to remain the same in every one of its repetitions. But, on the other hand, if we call to mind how skilful were the artists then residing at the capital of the world in making all manner of dies, stamps, and moulds of every material used for impressing all substances, whether hard or soft, it is possible to conceive something of the nature of *copper-plate printing* to have been hit upon by Varro



for the purpose of carrying out his scheme. Certain it is that there are numerous Roman bronze stamps still preserved that have the inscription *in relief* and reversed, and which, consequently, could only have been used with *ink* for signing papyrus or parchment. To this day the Orientals use their signets (although incised in gems or metal), not for impressing wax, but for carrying a glutinous ink, exactly after the manner of a copper-plate, and transferring it to the paper requiring signature.

But there is a second method that Varro might have employed, the idea of which has been suggested to me by a remark of Caylus,\* applying to a cognate branch of art. He believed he had discovered sure indications that the ornamental borders and similar accessories to the designs upon Etruscan vases had been transferred to the surface by means of a *stencil-plate*, that is, a thin sheet of copper through which the outlines of the pattern are pierced, which being applied to the surface to be decorated, a brush charged with thick paint drawn over the outside leaves the pattern behind at a single stroke. It is very possible to imagine Varro's learning this process of the ancient potters during his antiquarian researches, and his seizing upon the same for the realisation of his long meditated scheme. A set of stencil-plates, engraved with the most prominent features of the portraits in bold outline, would reproduce the likenesses in a sketchy, yet effective style, identical with that of the mediæval block-books, and well calculated for expressing the individuality of the heads. The Chinese have from time immemorial produced books illustrated with cuts by precisely the same process as that devised by the monkish precursors of the real printer; and why should not the same notion, suggested by a similar want, have occurred to the ingenious Roman?

Again, I cannot help suspecting that the Etruscan *graffiti*, incised designs on gold plates forming the heads of rings (a style of ornamentation so popular with that people), might have been intended for transferring ink to smooth surfaces, after the present fashion of the

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\* 'Recueil d'Antiquités,' i. p. 17.

East. It is self-evident, from the thinness of the plate, these graffiti were not made for impressing wax or clay; and in those primitive ages rings were always worn for some practical purpose, not as mere decorations for the hand.

But to return to my first conjecture—an actual notice of the employment of a stencil-plate is to be met with in ancient history. Procopius, to exemplify the barbarism of Theodoric, states that he was never able to master so much of the art of writing as to sign his own name, and therefore had recourse to the expedient of passing his pen through the letters THEO, pierced through a gold plaque, which was laid upon the document requiring his signature.\* This fact looks like the application of a method already in common use, but for some different purpose.

And to conclude, the best testimony to the *originality* of Varro's invention is, as I remarked at starting, to be found in the forcible expressions of Pliny in noticing it, which, therefore, I shall give in full. "M. Varro benignissimo *invento* insertis voluminum suorum facunditati septingentorum *aliquo modo* imaginibus, non passus intercidere figuras, aut vetustatem ævi contra homines valere: *inventor* muneris etiam Deis invidiosi quando immortalitatem non solum dedit, verum etiam in omnes terras misit ut præsentes esse ubique cœu Di possent."†

\* The Greek was glad to make the most of the stupidity of the Goth. The thing that so puzzled Theodoric was not the four simple letters, but the complicated monogram of his whole name in their outline, such as it appears on his denarii. The Byzantine emperors, like the sultans, always sign with an elaborate monogram.

† xxxv. 2.







## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

I SHALL conclude this section with some remarks upon the mechanical execution, the art, and the subjects—"the matter, form, and style," of the several classes of gems treated of in the preceding chapters, but which could not be introduced under their respective heads without embarrassing the general view of the subject.

A very marked distinction of the Archaic-Greek and Greco-Italian work in intaglio, is the introduction of the *méplat*—to use the French technical term for what can only be expressed in English by a long periphrasis. It may be defined as the sinking the whole design into the stone, with its various portions, in a series of planes, at depths slightly different, upon which the muscles of the body, the folds of the drapery, and the other accessories, were finally traced in by the *adamant* point. The impression given by such an intaglio has its outline nearly as much raised as its highest projections, yet without sacrificing any of its effectiveness; a peculiarity noticeable in the coinage of the same epoch and regions, of which perhaps the best illustration is presented by the types upon the large flat didrachms of Sybaris.

This flatness of the interior of the intaglio may be pronounced the

surest criterion of the antique origin of any gem, for it is the result of the peculiar instrument serving the ancient engraver, by means of which, acting like a scraper, he was enabled to produce a flat surface at the *bottom* of the cavity he was sinking in the stone. This he could effect with greater facility than a rounded surface, exactly the converse of the technique of the modern art, in which the wheel being the chief instrument employed for sinking the intaglio, to give the *méplat* is impossible, and semi-cylindrical or grooved hollows betray the employment of modern means even in works pretending to date from the earliest times.

In this early style it will be observed that the design is invariably so distributed as to fill up the entire field, whether of the scarabæus or of the ring-stone. Hence the forced attitudes and violent exertions displayed by the figures of the men or the beasts depicted: attitudes purposely sought after by the designer, in order to accommodate the flexure of their bodies to the elliptical contour of the field upon which he was employed.\* But in truth this peculiarity runs through the whole of the glyptic art before its decline, never to leave unimproved any portion of the small space granted for the display of the artist's taste. It may be laid down as a rule, that in all works of a good period, especially in camei, the subject, be it a head, a single figure, or a group, is always so carried out as to engross as nearly as possible the entire surface of the stone, leaving no more than a narrow margin in the way of background, often little more than sufficing for the hold of the metal setting. Modern camei, on the other hand, the works of artists accustomed to admire and to draw from prints done upon paper, to which a large field and background are absolutely indispensable, usually display a wide field surrounding the relief, which is, as it were, gathered up (*ramassé*) in its dimensions, not expanded and flattened out,

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\* This mode of treating the subject is not peculiar to the gems, but equally pervades all the coins of the archaic period. The Lion and Bull regardant on the stater of Croesus, the Lion attacking the Bull of Acanthus, the Cow and Calf of Corcyra, the Bull *regardant* of Sybaris, are in every point identical with the same types as figured on the scarabæi.



as in the true antique. This is likewise the case with intaglio work. But when the ancient engraver wished to exhibit the full beauty of the material he was working up—for example, the sardonxy or the nicolo—he bevelled off the edge all round, so as to bring out the brilliant contrast of its concentric colours, and thus contracted the field to the smallest limits compatible with the requirements of the intended composition. This is the reason why the imperial portrait camei are so often inclosed within a garland of laurel or of oak-leaves, when of large extent, or with a moulding when smaller; the object being to bring into play the several colours of the stone upon as many points as possible, and at the same time to contract the field around the relief.

But to return to the archaic *sculptors*, their intagli—for camei they never attempted\*—are for the most part surrounded by the border, the patterns of which have already been described under “Etruscan Scarabei.” These borders are either the *milled*, formed of small strokes set close together; the *granulated*, representing a string of beads, which obviously gave the idea; or the *guilloche*, an open chain; the last, from its extreme difficulty of execution, only occurring upon the most highly-finished performances. The milled border is even to be observed on a few Roman gems, but there its rudeness and irregularity show it to be but an unmeaning finish; whereas it is manifest, from the labour bestowed upon it in good Etruscan pieces, that the engraver considered it a very essential portion of his work.†

As a rule, the best archaic intagli are met with upon the tri-coloured agate, to use the popular name, so called from the white stripe between two dark bands of different shades, transversely crossing

\* Unless we choose to class as such the masks, or the yet rarer full-length figures found cut upon the backs of scarabei; exceptional cases, that merely support the rule. Until the true sardonxy, with its regularly even strata, came into fashion, works in relief did not suggest themselves to the eye of the engraver.

† No coins of Greece proper, or the islands, exhibit the *guilloche* border, which, on the other hand, invariably appears on the peculiar incuse archaic coinage of the Italian cities; and again, the few scarabei whose legends prove their Hellenic origin beyond a doubt, dispense with the border of the field entirely. From this fact the true parentage of the majority of the fine works thus framed may be pretty satisfactorily deduced.

the field. The regularity of these bands constituted the value of the gem in the estimation of the Hellenic lapidary. This stone is the precious onyx of Theophrastus and the Greek writers; but when one of its layers was *red* (the distinctive character of the *sard*), it then took the name of *sardonx*. During the whole of this period it was cut across the layers, in order to present to the eye the bands so much admired. It was not until camei became the rage under the Romans that the sardonx was worked with its layers left in a horizontal position. Then it was that the opaque variety (the *nicolo*) came into fashion. It is evident that before this application of the species, the Greeks, as Pliny notes of the Indians, had regarded it as valueless. From the difference of shades, its surface does not display the engraving upon it nearly so well as does a single-coloured stone, whether translucent or opaque; but the great abundance of existing examples shows that it was considered the gem above all others proper for signets; and the reason I at last found supplied by Pliny, "because it was almost the only stone to which the wax used in sealing would not adhere." The allusion of Theophrastus to its parallel bands of black and white, prove that his *δρύχιον* was the stone in question.

I have elsewhere devoted a separate article\* to the legends found upon the Etruscan works—a subject so interesting in its bearings upon the Asiatic colonization of Italy, the true character of the Tyrrhene language, and its influence upon the religious nomenclature of the Romans. The strange modes in which the simplest Greek names are barbarized upon the finest works representing the mythic heroes, such as  $\Xi\text{T}\text{V}\text{T}$  for  $\text{T}\text{T}\Delta\text{E}\text{T}\Sigma$ ,  $\Xi\text{\AA}\text{\AA}\text{A}$  for  $\text{A}\text{X}\text{I}\text{A}\text{\AA}\text{E}\text{T}\Sigma$ , bespeak foreigners accustomed to sounds and terminations of a totally different nature. The rare instances of genuine Greek works inscribed with the owner's name correctly spelt, and in the Ionic character, have already been described. They only serve to attest the total independence and the infinitely greater development of the glyptic art amongst the Etruscans at this early period.

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\* 'Handbook,' p. 38.



The Etruscans and their rivals the Greco-Italians appear scarcely ever to have attempted the heads even of deities, much less portraits of individuals, upon their gems. Such first essays, indeed, are very rarely to be met with prior to the ages when Greek art had attained to full maturity. Amongst the earliest intaglio heads known to me is a jacinth (Praun), a female head covered with the *mitra*, bay-crowned, passing for Sappho's,\* quite Assyrian in its style, and resembling the types of certain primitive coins of the islands in the *Ægean*. Of perhaps equal antiquity is the diademed head, upon a large scarabeus in green jasper (Blacas). The amethyst scarabeus (Blacas) with a beautiful youthful head, Castor, in the conical pileus, the counterpart of one painted on an Oscan vase, and the noble Pallas head, on a grand sard scarabeus (Castellani), belong to a more advanced period of the art, the epoch, probably, of Phidias.

In this there is nothing surprising, for according to the analogy of all the other departments of art, the first engravers exercised their skill in representing those animals upon which in their times of primitive simplicity man's thoughts were constantly busied, either as objects of utility, of amusement, or of terror. Thus the ox, the stag, and the lion, so frequent upon these gems, may be safely accounted the first-fruits of the newly-imported art,† a conclusion also deducible from their extreme stiffness, coupled with the most laborious finish. For rudeness and slovenliness of execution—except where, owing to an imperfect *mécanique*, as in the common scarabei—betray the epoch of the decline of a long practised art, where great demand has occasioned cheap and hurried manufacture. Cautious and careful are the hands of the first inventors of any technical process. The same observation applies to the cognate art of coining, the types of the earliest currency being invariably animals. It needs only to cite the

\* More probably intended for the Erythrean Sibyl, to judge from its identity with her head on a coin of the family Carisia. This gem is the very counterpart of one found at Kertch, now in the Russian Cabinet.

† They may have conveyed religious ideas, and served talismanic purposes, as being attributes of the several deities. That they so appear on the Assyrian and Persian seals, can admit of no dispute.

tortoise on the drachmæ of Phidon, and the lion and bull confronted on the staters of Cræsus.

The next step was the human figure, at full length, engaged in the pursuits immediately interesting the owner of the signet—agriculture, war, the chase. In the next stage came the heroes of former times, but all depicted with the literal accuracy of daily life. Lastly, the gods themselves, now represented and worshipped in the human shape. The most ancient Hellenic, or rather Pelasgic divinities, were only expressed by symbols—rivers, trees, or stones; the rough stone becomes the pillar of marble, then of metal; last of all, a human head and arms are set upon it, as we find in the oldest colossus of Greece, the Amyclæan Apollo.\* Even in the time of Pausanias, amongst the Lacedæmonians the Dioscuri were represented by two parallel wooden posts, connected by two transverse pieces, and forming the character II, which still represents the twin brothers of the Zodiac.

Such continued the rule with the glyptic art for ages after it had reached a point of mechanical perfection never to be surpassed; for what subsequent work either in gems or in medals equals in precision of touch and in elaboration the Greco-Italian scarabei of the first class, or the thin incuse didrachms of the same style and epoch? All throughout this long period, and amongst the innumerable intagli it has bequeathed us, we hardly ever find an attempt made to engrave on a gem a head or a bust even of a deity, much less the likeness of an individual, although statutes of all kinds had become universal long before. It is only when nearly all traces of archaic mannerism have disappeared that the gems give us heads of heroes, nymphs, and gods, and—the art having now attained to its fullest perfection—regal portraits, the latter certainly not before the age of Alexander.†

\* A plain shaft of bronze, fifty cubits high; the exact counterpart of the Hindoo *Iat*, and possibly itself a memorial of the Indian origin of the first civilizers of the Peloponnesus, the traditional Pelops and his Phrygians.

† The first indubitable portrait that appears in Grecian art is the noble head of Artaxerxes Mnemon on the rare coin of the tributary Ionian state, Halicarnassus. To the Persians, indeed, is due the honour of the invention of preserving by sculpture



Even in the Eginetan marbles, where the drawing of the bodies and their outlines are perfect, the faces are all conventional, without the least attempt at expression, fully retaining the primitive Assyrian type, with the same grim fixed smile on the lips of all. How late it was before even Painting made the first step towards producing likenesses of living men, appears from the fame acquired by Panæus, brother to Phidias, by this bold innovation, first introduced into his grand picture of the Battle of Marathon. "The use of colours had by this time become so general, and the art had arrived at such perfection, that he is recorded to have painted portrait-figures of the commanders in that battle—Callimachus, Cynagirus, Miltiades,\* on the side of the Athenians; Datis and Artaphernes, of the barbarian host" (Plin. xxxv. 34).† Engraving such portraits on gems, it may be confidently affirmed, was never thought of before the Macedonian princes set the example of putting their own heads upon the coinage instead of that of their tutelary god, previously the universal rule equally with tyranni and republics. Even in this stage of the art portraits of private persons are utterly unknown. Indeed, they do not appear, as far as my experience extends, before the latter days of the Roman Republic, when the moneyers, generally members of the great families, began to put upon their own mintages the heads of their distinguished progenitors, and at the same time to adopt them for the type of the family signet. Heads represented in front face commence very late in the Greek period. Under the Empire they are frequent, and gradually this

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the authentic likenesses of historical personages. No one can doubt that the portraits of Cyrus upon his monument at Mirghab, of Darius, with the nine prisoners, upon the well-known rock tablet at Behistan, were faithfully copied from the life. Probably the most ancient attempt at portraiture on a *gem* is the bust of the Satrap of Salamis, already noticed at p. 68.

\* Of his manner a good conception may be obtained from the admirable *Blacas* Miltiades, probably a transcript from this very picture (p. 199).

† Even statuaries never thought of making actual likenesses of the person in their figures, but always idealized them, as late as the time of Lysistratus, brother of Lysippus, the inventor of taking plaster casts from the face. This being so, some considerable interval must be allowed before the innovation extended to the domain of gems, c

becomes the established style for what were intended as the most elaborate works of the Decline.

In their treatment of the imperial portraits, the Roman artists display every variety of style, and have even manifestly taxed their invention for novel modes of representing the one subject which their patrons at court called upon them so incessantly to repeat. A popular mode of representing the youthful Cæsar or heir-apparent was in the character of Mercury, "the beneficent god," with wings in the hair, or the caduceus on the shoulder. Thus appear frequently Caligula, Nero, M. Aurelius, and Caracalla, most inappropriately all, save the one so auspiciously deified.\* The numerous portraits of Nero show, by the nascent beard, which is seen on nearly all, that they were taken during the first bloom of his popularity, during the opening years of his reign, when a new golden age was confidently expected from the sway of the pupil of Seneca. For these heads must have been made before his twentieth year, when, on the occasion of his first cutting off his beard, he instituted the festival called *Juvenalia*. Of his portraits in more advanced life, but one—and with radiated crown—has ever come to my knowledge.

In the same spirit of ingenious adulation, the empress figures as Cybele, Ceres, or Isis; her daughters in the guise of Diana, but with their hair dressed in the fashion of the day, however incongruous it might be with the established type of the virgin goddess. The emperors often parade in the character of Ammon, or of Serapis;† occasionally as the two deities combined, as the so-called Didius Julianus (a Commodus), on the famous Marlborough Cameo, where his consort figures with the attributes of Ceres and Libera.

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\* More rarely as Achilles with the buckler, and the spear over the shoulder. On a unique sard of mine, the ill-fated Diadumenian wields, instead of the spear, the rudder of Fortuna, an obvious and ingenious allusion to the blessings so vainly expected from his maturity.

† A very interesting example is the Blacas lapis-lazuli of Pesc. Niger, with a butterfly perched on the calathus, to express his vivifying potency. Around are the emblems of the Mysteries, the pipe of Atyr, the Berecynthia tibia, lizard, scorpion, sun-star, and ΔΑΙΘ, "the Gate," a technical term in those ceremonies.



The execution of the intaglio was similarly varied: sometimes it is done in with little depth, after the former Greek manner, and on gems of large volume—like the Julia by Evodus, on an immense aquamarine; an Augustus with the caduceus on sard (Marlborough); the same head with the star on an extraordinary nicolo (Fould); and other well known examples that ornament the principal cabinets of Europe. Or again, for the sake of exhibiting his marvellous dexterity, the artist has resorted to the opposite extreme, engraving portraits of perfect accuracy and wonderful finish upon gems almost microscopic in size; for example, a head of Titus on a prase a quarter of an inch high by three-sixteenths wide; and another in red jasper, only slightly larger, in the old Praun Cabinet. Of these, the former is probably without an equal in the Roman series for fidelity, spirit, and minuteness. Again we find intaglio heads cut extremely deep, given in front face; of which the Io, the Muse, the Julius, and the Demosthenes, all of Dioscorides, may be quoted as unparalleled examples. From the extreme care bestowed upon the execution of such gems in front face, and frequently from their larger dimensions and superior quality, a proof of their original importance may be deduced, supporting the conjecture that such was the type adopted on the state-signet; which again explains why this style became universal for the imperial portraits of the Lower Empire, Alaric's for example. That the imperial state-seal was, as a matter of course, the head of the reigning prince, appears from Spartian (26), who reckons amongst the other omens<sup>e</sup> foreshowing the coming death of Hadrian, that on his last birthday the signet ring engraved with his own portrait fell spontaneously off his finger as he was commending his successor to the senators.

The large busts in front-face of the Provinces (of Africa two fine examples are known to me), done in an extremely bold, though rudest Roman style, may be conjectured to have been similarly official seals, and used by the governor of the province. It were scarcely possible that any private individual should have taken for his own signet so pretentious a device without drawing down upon himself destruction

from the suspicious jealousy of the emperor. When Clodius Macer rebelled against Nero he struck denarii at Carthage with the head of Africa for obverse; and such is the usual reverse of the early base silver of Alexandria, facts establishing the official character of the device.\* One is, from all these considerations, tempted to the conclusion that such portraits in front-face were ordered for official signets, but those in profile for the use of persons wearing them from friendship or out of adulation. The passage of Pliny's, granting the *entrée* at Claudius's court exclusively to such as had received the ring bearing his bust in relief in gold, goes far to establish the significant character of similar types under the empire.

Gems presenting the features of an unpopular prince, or favourite, were doubtless smashed to atoms upon the death or downfall of the originals; gem-portraits sharing the fate of their colossal brethren in bronze or marble, when, the day of retribution coming,

"Descendunt statuae restimque sequuntur."

I have met with numerous examples, to all appearance, of this "execution done in effigy;" for instance, a Commodus with his titles—an important piece in red jasper—evidently fractured intentionally; a Caligula, also with a legend; and the fine Caracalla of the British Museum (Townley Gems).†

In conclusion, to return to certain particulars but slightly noticed in the foregoing sections, though of considerable weight in the

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\* This strange head-covering is first assumed on the coinage of Egypt, by Cleopatra Selene, whose son, Ptolemy Alexander, also figures in the same. It is probable that he takes in this way the character of the *Libyan* Hercules, as his Macedonian rivals did of the lion-clad Theban demi-god. To see in this singular ornament nothing deeper than a commemoration of his strength in war elephants (the usual explanation) is simply absurd.

† About the time of Severus a fashion came in of adding appropriate mottoes to ladies' portraits, doubtless *gages d'amour*. A Blacas nicolo with a male bust on obverse, a female on reverse, has the field round the latter filled with monograms, out of which the acute Visconti extracts the appropriate address, "Ades, M. Veturi Amor!" Another lady (on a sard of my own) expresses her sentiments undisguisedly by inscribing at full length, "Amo te ego."



distinguishing of the antique from modern imitations. Firstly, it is an invariable rule that all antique designs are marked by an extreme simplicity. Rarely does the composition include more than two figures, or if others be introduced, they are treated as mere accessories, and only indicated in outline. To this branch of art Horace's maxim can be applied with but slight variation:—

“Nec quarta loqui persona laboret.”

Except in the archaic school, which preferred, as already pointed out, the representation of forced attitudes and violent muscular exertion, *Repose* is the grand characteristic of the matured Greek style, and its successor the finer Roman. Hence it is that the best works of the most famous artists are invariably either single figures or heads, as will appear upon examining the descriptive catalogue of engravers and their genuine works. As the necessary result of this restriction, nothing in the nature of a picture with perspective, background, and carefully finished details of unimportant objects, is ever to be discovered in truly antique gems, whether camei or intagli. Such a treatment of the design at once betrays the work, however antique its aspect, for a production, at the earliest, of the Revival, when the engravers, vainly attempting a rivalry with painting, expended their skill in endeavouring to create a picture upon a stone. These were the lingering effects of the practice of mediæval art, where all the objects in a composition, whether picture or bas-relief, are considered of the same importance and made equally prominent.

Again, there is a marked soberness in the invention of the subject; or rather, there is no *invention* at all in it. It is always a literal transcript of some event in mythology offering a serious or a mystical interpretation; or else some feat of Epic legend, that is, of the traditional history of their ancestors; or lastly, some business or diversion of every-day life. All these are rendered upon the gem according to certain unalterable and precise rules, and nothing fanciful is ever allowed to intrude. The whole design is carried out with the rigid simplicity of the old tragedians, where one or two

actors do and speak everything required for the conduct of the plot. In this spirit are conceived and treated the scenes of the Epic Cycle, that prolific theme with the early Greek and Italiote engravers. With the Roman school, art, though remaining in its fullest mechanical perfection for the space of two centuries, became entirely *prosaic* in the choice of its subjects. For gem-engraving "*scalptura*" being from the first ancillary to "*sculpture*," and ever taking for models the greater productions of its sister art—the Etruscan his terra-cotta gods and friezes, the Greek his bronze and marble statues—the gem-artist never attempted anything in miniature the prototype of which had not beforehand presented itself to his eyes on a larger scale. Another reason this for the simplicity of their compositions. Neither the one nor the other ever thought of representing events of ancient or of present *history*; an observation which applies invariably to the Greek, and with but rare exceptions to the Roman epoch. In the latter, indeed, a few great men assumed for their seal some notable event in their own career, as Sylla did with the "Surrender of Jugurtha," but representing the scene in the most simple manner, and exactly as it still appears upon the coins minted under his direction. Such complex subjects as the "Battles of Alexander," the "Death of Lucretia," "Scævola before King Porsenna," the "Murder of Julius Cesar," &c., compositions over-crowded with figures, grouped as in a modern painting, and all in violent action—subjects we so commonly behold upon the large pieces of the Cinquecento and later schools—all this has no precedent whatever in antique art. Still less (if possible) do we find Virgilian or Ovidian episodes, those favourite fields for Italian artists of the Revival in every department—painting, enamelling, pottery, metal-work, and glyptics. All truly antique themes are ideas hallowed by long use and veneration, the "*scriptural subjects*," so to speak, of the ages that embodied them upon the gem. This is the distinguishing feature of the Roman school, the vast majority of its productions being connected with religious ideas. How many spring from astrology! how many are mere talismans or amulets! the latter indeed constituting the sole



class that after the times of Severus afforded occupation to the practitioners of the fast declining glyptic art.

*Licentious* scenes or figures are never to be found upon antique gems. Even in the nude figures the sex is but indicated, and nothing more. In the moral code of the ancients all sexual matters were looked upon as mere things of natural necessity, indifferent in themselves, but, like the rest, not to be obtruded on the eye. Their artists therefore decently—

“Vite postscenia celant.”

But under the modern system of ideas, the case was far otherwise, when virtue came to be regarded as no more than a strict attention to such particulars, and the longing for the forbidden had produced its usual result. Lascivious images of the grossest kind are common enough in modern gems, and the labour and skill bestowed by the best hands of the times upon such unworthy matters convincingly attest the favour with which they were received.

The number of antique gems still preserved—and how small in proportion is this to the still buried\*—is perfectly incredible, before a little reflection upon the cause of this abundance furnishes a satisfactory explanation. To leave out of the account the five centuries before our era which produced the finest works, though in less numbers (for the great mass of the intagli that are now to be seen must be referred to the Roman Empire), we should remember that for the space of three centuries they were being manufactured in countless thousands all over the civilized world, as articles not merely of ornament, but subservient to the most important uses, authenticating all transactions of business, and employed as substitutes for keys in the days when the locksmith's art was as yet in its infancy.

Their material, completely indestructible, sets at defiance time and the action of the elements; even fire itself can do no more than

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\* For example, the sites of the great cities of Asia Minor, where the art flourished so luxuriantly in its best times, are as yet totally undisturbed.

discolour it. The stone whose beauty and art charmed the eyes of Mithridates, of Cæsar, and of Mæcenas, preserves the same charms unimpaired, unfading, for the delight of the man of taste in our day. The barbarian, or the new convert, who melted down the precious ring, bracelet, or vase, for the sake of the metal, threw away as worthless or as idolatrous the sard or onyx with which it was adorned. The truly priceless work of art was received by Earth, and securely sheltered within her protecting bosom, until reviving civilization again enabled the world to appreciate its value.

Amidst this profusion of antique treasures, the student must ever bear in mind one axiom, that in the old world, as in all times, mediocrity was the rule, first-class works the exception: hence the great majority of gems, whether Greek or Roman, fall very far short of the standard of absolute perfection. They were to a great extent an article of trade, produced as rapidly as possible; in short, made to sell. Still, even in these one often cannot but admire the effect imparted by a few bold and rapid touches of the master-hand. The infinite variety in the designs (for in the innumerable repetitions of the same subject, such as the "Death of Capaneus," or the "Labours of Hercules," no two intagli exactly coincide) is a fact at first sight difficult to account for; but which, perhaps, may be explained upon the same grounds that dictated Solon's law forbidding the engraver's keeping by him the copy of any signet he should have once sold. For the validity and assurance of the seal were done away with if a duplicate of it could be readily procured.

From what has been just remarked as to the mediocrity of the great majority of antique gems, it is an obvious caution that pieces of fine execution and good design require to be scrutinized with the most critical eye before their genuineness be pronounced beyond dispute. The best engravers of the past three centuries naturally have copied such antique models as were the most admired, and have reproduced them with the exactest fidelity; *that* being the sole means by which they could obtain an adequate remuneration for their labours in the high prices commanded by the originals for



which their imitations were substituted.\* Mediocre gems being plentiful in the market, and to be procured for a trifling sum, were thus left beyond the danger of forgery.

It is very provoking that no data are to be met with in the classical writers as to the prices which in their own times engraved gems commanded, viewed as works of art, irrespectively of the value of the mere material. The latter, indeed, was trifling in the case of the particular stone (the sard) on which the greatest masters of the art displayed their talent. Even Pliny, our usually unfailing resource in all such matters, and fond as he is of quoting the selling value of other works of art, disappoints us in this particular case. In only one instance does he notice the price of an intaglio (the emerald with the Amyclone, bought by Ismenias), and even here, unfortunately, the stone being the most precious then known, it cannot be determined how much the engraving had augmented the intrinsic value. The sum paid, however, was not very high, being no more than four staters, or four guineas. This omission is the more provoking, as he gives many instances of the prices obtained by silver chasings of old masters, productions of a kindred nature, and the predecessors of camei themselves. Nevertheless, we may well believe that excellence in this branch met with encouragement proportionate to that bestowed upon talent exhibited on a grander scale. We are informed of the enormous value of precious stones under the Empire, and yet we find him observing that, "luxury had introduced many varieties into this fashion (of rings), as in everything else, by adding gems of exquisite lustre to the original gold, and so loading the finger with a whole fortune; and again by engraving them with various figures, so that in the latter case *art*, in the former the *substance*, should constitute the value" (xxxiii. 6). These are terms that imply an equality of value between a first-rate engraving and a precious stone, however highly rated by the world of fashion. As "gems by the old masters" are particularly

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\* See the anecdote of Pichler and his two copies of the Boy with the Trochus, given in my notice of his life.

specified by Suetonius, as collected with such ardour by Julius Cæsar, we may be very certain that the predilection of such an authority would enormously send up their price in the *Septa*. And, again, when Elagabalus made himself ridiculous by setting gems, "the works of the greatest artists," in his shoes, the stupid debauchee would not have thought of the extravagance, had not their actual money value at the time exceeded that of precious stones and pearls, which latter the more tasteful Nero had put to the same use.







#### ASTROLOGICAL SUBJECTS.

THE influence of Astrology upon the Roman world was far from confining itself to the expression of her ideas and occult powers under tastelessly symbolical and enigmatical forms, like those bequeathed to us by her half-daughter Gnosticism—it has left us an innumerable host of elegant monuments, but purely astrological both in appearance and in purport. These moreover extend from the earliest to the latest days of the art, for the Persian cylinders present the astral deities with the rites of the Magi, whose religion was but another name for astrology, and the Zodiacal Signs occur on works of even the Archaic-Greek period;\* but it was under the Empire, from Domitian's age downwards, that the demand for gems, or rather talismans, derived from the prescriptions of this science, grew so pressing as almost to banish every other subject from the engraver's repertory.

Astrology now became the fashionable study; entire libraries were formed of the treatises upon this science alone, as Augustine tells us when speaking of his friend Firminus. Of these works the principal

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\* A painting of six of the Signs is reckoned by Pliny amongst the masterpieces of the great artist, Athenion.

now extant are the poem (only fragments preserved) of Manetho, dedicated to one of the Ptolemies; that of Manilius, written under Augustus; and the voluminous treatise in prose of Sextus Julius Firmicus, dedicated to the Count Lollian in the reign of Constantinus Junior. He gives a most interesting drawing of his patron's horoscope, and points out how it was verified by the strange vicissitudes of his life. Horace alludes to his own horoscope (though uncertain whether it were Libra, Scorpio, or Capricornus) as occasioning the striking similarity in the chances of his life with those that befel Mæcenas:—

“Uteunque nostrum incredibili modo  
Consentit *Astrum*.”

Augustus, Suetonius records, published his own nativity, to display to the world his confidence in the success it promised him, and put his natal Sign, Capricorn, upon one of his coinages. Tiberius passed the latter part of his reign in his observatory at Capri, surrounded by his astrologers, “cum grege Chaldæo,” as Juvenal hath it; and had himself attained to such proficiency in the study, as to predict the remote and brief enjoyment of imperial power by Galba, then only a child.\* In private life the satirists continually ridicule the prevalence of this *belief*, and depict the heir anxiously inquiring how much longer fate intends keeping him out of his long-coveted wealth by the tedious longevity of the possessor—

“Filius ante diem patrios inquiri in annos;”

or the lady not even venturing to use an eye-salve without first consulting her nativity, or to take a meal or a bath before she looks out the lucky hour in the almanac of Petosiris. Later, Claudian (Ep. xxv.) alludes to the calculating nativities on an astronomical

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\* Augustine, after joining the Manicheans, devoted himself to the study of astrology, to which the semi-Magian sect were naturally much addicted. He calculated nativities, and predicted the result of undertakings, until Alypius shook his faith in the reality of the science. But what completely convinced him of its futility was the story Firmianus related to him of a slave child and himself born under exactly the same horoscope, and therefore by right entitled to same fortunes in after life, yet whose fates proved totally diverse.



globe of glass which (Ep. xviii.) we find was the invention of Archimedes—an ingenious piece of mechanism, for it exhibited all the motions of the Zodiac and of the heavenly bodies,—

“Inclusus variis famulatur spiritus astris  
Et vivum certis motibus urget opus.”

And this same anticipated orrery is spoken of by Ovid,—

“Arte Syracosia suspensus in æthere parvo  
Stat globus immensi parva figura poli.”

And Propertius introduces an astrologer boasting his skill,—

“—ærata signa movere pila.”

This “movere Signa” was the technical term for calculating nativities, for Ovid has,—

“Non illi cælo labentia Signa movebant.”

Most unfortunately no account is extant of the machinery by which these complicated movements were effected, but seeing that the whole was inclosed within a globe, it could not have been a mere adaptation of the principle of the clepsydra, although Vitruvius minutely explains the construction of a very complicated astronomical clock in his chapter *De Horologiis*. But in whatever way the motions were produced, this celestial globe appears on a gem (doubtless the official signet of some eminent *Sidrophel* of the day), placed upon a cippus, with a party of astrologers seated in conclave around, one of whom is demonstrating upon it with his wand, *radius*. We again find another astrologer adopting for his signet a still more definite emblem of his profession, a man bending forward and inscribing in a large volume held on his knee the horoscope of the *native*, whose birth is decorously typified by a little infant's head just emerging into daylight from the lap of Earth. The sun and moon conjoined in the field distinctly point out the real meaning of this design,\* which formerly, in compliance with the prevailing mania for discovering a

\* Which very frequently occurs, a proof that it was a professional device.

historical subject in every intaglio, was understood as the finding of the head of Tolus. Of this type I possess an example dating from the Etruscan period, a proof how early the profession had become a recognised and established one; just as the augurs, so important a body in those same times, put upon their signets the figure of one of themselves taking an observation, seated in silence on the ground, and holding up his *lituus* to divide the heavens into *templa*.

Of the whole class, the most frequent\* are the Signs of the Zodiac, either singly, combined, or as adjuncts to deities the representatives of the several planets, the "gods of the nativity," as the Gnostics styled them. It may reasonably be supposed that in many cases these represent the owner's horoscope, for that persons blessed with an "auspicious nativity" indulged their vanity by parading it before the public eye is plain from many allusions in classic history. Thus Severus selected for his second wife Julia Domna, merely because she had a "royal nativity;" and many a patrician was sacrificed by the timid tyrants of later times for the same reason as Metius Pomposianus had been by Domitian, "*quia imperatoriam genesin habere ferebatur.*" Of all these horoscopes the most favourable was Capricorn,

"— in Augusti felix qui falsarit ortus."

"Who shone propitious on Augustus' birth,"—

as sings his protégé Manilius; a circumstance promulgated to the world by the emperor's order on the denarius above alluded to, and for the same reason its figure often accompanies his portrait on gems. Firmicus lays down that "on the ascension of the third degree in Capricorn, emperors, kings, and persons destined to fill the highest offices, are born." The same author gives a very detailed catalogue of the "apotelesmata," or the influence exerted by each degree of the

\* Most popular of all would have been the Asiatic Moon-god, *Deus Lunus* (imaged as the bust of a boy in a Phrygian cap, resting upon a crescent), had the belief of his special votaries, the citizens of Carthæ, been more prevalent in the Roman world. They held, says Spartian ("Caracalla") "that all who regarded the Moon as a feminine power were doomed ever to be subject to female domination, but all worshipping and invoking the luminary as masculine, became themselves the masters of the other sex."



respective Signs in its ascension upon the destiny of the infant born under it, for the proper influence of the Signs was greatly modified by their varying altitude in the heavens. Manilius also gives a similar table, though less full (subjoined at the end of this chapter), as only describing the influence of each Sign at its rising, or when attended by the ascension of certain constellations. For example, under *Aries* the native will be a great traveller; under *Leo*, a warrior; under *Cancer*,\* a sailor; under *Aquarius*, honest, chaste, and religious; *Pisces*, oddly enough (on the principle of contraries one would suppose), brought to the light the talkative and slanderous.

Hence to ascertain the exact place of the ascendant at the very moment of the native's birth, one Chaldæan sat by the woman in labour, and signified the coming of the infant into the world to the observer Chaldæan stationed on the top of the house, viewing the heavens, by beating on a metal disk. From which Hippolytus (iv. 5) takes occasion to prove the futility of the science from the fact that the precise moment of birth is undefinable; and also that a certain amount of time must be lost between the sounding the *discus* and the noise reaching the observer's ears aloft; arguments which show what scrupulous exactitude was professed in these calculations.

Although amongst all the Signs the chief favourite to grace the Roman signet was Capricornus, perhaps in compliment to the first of the emperors, Leo also often figures on gems, and so does Virgo, the deified Eregone, who might be mistaken for Victory were it not for the helmet on her head, to mark her being the "*Marathonia virgo*," as Statius styles her, and the wheatsheaf in her hand. Scorpio, the horoscope of Tiberius (and therefore emblazoned upon the shield of the trophy commemorating his Rætian victory in the "*Gemma Augustea*"), was also a favourite device, and that with very good reason in ages when people credited Manilius's dictum as to its influence upon the fortunes of the native. Or it may have been even

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\* *Cancer* was far from being a popular sigil, but when it does occur, has often the back of the shell carved into a human visage, which Raspe very plausibly supposes to typify Sol in the Sign.

then a medicinal amulet, as it was in the sixteenth century, when, as De Boot records, this sigil, cut on a green jasper when the Sun was in the Sign, was universally believed a sure protection against the stone.

A *cornucopia* generally accompanies the figure of a Sign, both to denote its beneficent power and to indicate its astrological character, lest it should be mistaken for either a simple animal or a merely fanciful device.

There is a design of which so many repetitions are extant, both antique and of Renaissance date, as to proclaim beyond all mistaking the importance of the idea therein involved. Now, Plutarch ('Romulus') records that L. Tarrutius, a friend of Cicero's, had calculated the nativity of Rome according to the rules followed in the case of a human birth, and I cannot help seeing in this composition the pictured horoscope of the mistress of the world. To describe it:\* Jupiter is shown enthroned between Mars and Mercury standing, upon an arch, under which old Oceanus half emerges from his waves, the whole enclosed within the circle of the zodiac. The mystical importance of this design is apparent from the fact that it has been kept in view by the sculptor who executed the tomb of Junius Bassus, Prefect of Rome (dec. 359), the earliest, perhaps the most interesting Christian monument in existence, still remaining in situ upon the floor of the ancient basilica of St. Peter, now the crypt of the modern edifice. In this the principal bas-relief represents Christ seated between SS. Peter and Paul standing, his feet resting upon an aged man emerging from beneath, whose robe flies in a semicircle over his head, here probably representing *Αἰών* or *Sæculum*, the Genius of the world.

Macrobius (Sat. i. xxi.) has: "The Egyptians denominate the Sign Leo the 'House of the Sun,' inasmuch as this beast seems to derive

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\* There is a magnificent specimen in sard, of Renaissance work, in the Marlborough Cabinet; another even finer, in sardonyx, in the Fould; a third, in cameo, in the Webb; and Raspe engraves a fourth in the French Cabinet; a fifth, of smaller size, has been communicated to me as discovered some time back in a railway cutting in Sussex.



his own nature from that luminary, being in force and heat as superior to all other animals as the sun is to the stars. The lion's strength, too, lies in his chest and fore part of the body, but falls off towards his hinder quarters; similarly the sun's force waxes greater from morn to noon or from spring to summer, but declines towards his setting, or towards the winter, considered as the lower part of the year. The lion is always seen with his eyes wide open and full of fire, so doth the sun look upon the earth with open and fiery eye, with perpetual and un-averted gaze." Hence comes the lion's head, crowned with twelve rays, given to the Agathodæmon serpent upon so many Egyptian talismans. The lion's head was likewise considered the most appropriate discharger of a fountain, because the inundation of the Nile attained its height when the sun was in Leo.

The rule of assigning a *House* to each planet was, as this quotation shows, an Egyptian invention, and the other Signs were similarly provided in the following order. Of Saturn, the houses are Capricorn and Aquarius; of Jupiter, Pisces and Sagittarius; of Mars, Libra and Scorpio; of Venus, Aries and Taurus; of Mercury, Gemini and Virgo; of Sol,\* one diurnal, Leo; of Luna, one nocturnal, Cancer.

The planets, accompanied with their proper houses, often furnished the subjects of signets, as might justly be expected, when we consider the received doctrine that—

"The planets look most kindly on the birth,  
When from his proper house each views the earth;  
For then th' auspicious larger blessings shower,  
Whilst the malign are shorn of life if their power."

It would seem, however, that all the astral genii were best-tempered when shining in their *nocturnal* houses, for Dorotheus and Manetho (ii. 141) lay down that—

"Chiefest of all, with aspect most benign,  
Whilst in Aquarius doth old Saturn shine;  
Jove in the Archer joys; impetuous Mars  
Of right exults in fiery Scorpio's stars;

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\* In De Boot's time, "those who fancied themselves wiser than other folks" held that Sol, engraved on malachite, protected the wearer against demons and poisonous reptiles.

Soft Venus loves the Bull, the Virgin fair  
 Hermes regards as his peculiar care;  
 For to each planet that illumines the skies  
 His fitting *house* some favourite Sign supplies."

Three Signs often appear in company upon the same monument; for example, Virgo seated upon Taurus and Capricorn conjoined.\* This union expresses the joint influence for good of all the three, for some Signs were accounted friendly, some again hostile to each other. Such a figure is called a *Trine*, and its three components are found in the Signs respectively touched by the points of an equilateral triangle inscribed within the Zodiacal circle.

Besides the general influence of each *house* upon its own proper inhabitant, the power of the astral god varied both in extent and in nature according to the different *Signs*, nay, even the different degree of each in which he chanced to be found at the moment of a nativity. All these particulars are laid down with the utmost preciseness by the accurate Firmicus in his "Decreta Saturni, Jovis, &c.," *e.g.*: "If Mercury be found in Scorpio, the native will be handsome, fond of dress, liberal, and honourable. If he be found in Leo, the native will become a soldier and achieve glory and fame. If Jove be found in Cancer, the native will be the friend and confidant of the rich and powerful." A sufficient explanation this for our discovering the planetary gods depicted in company with other Signs than those constituting their own proper houses.

Again, the Signs appear as adjuncts to other deities besides those who rule the planets, for according to Manilius, each one was the protégé, *tutela*, of some particular god or goddess, whose choice seems to have been dictated by the use or nature of the animal or personage standing for the Zodiacal Power:—

"The Ram Minerva, Bull fair Venus tends,  
 The beauteous Twins Apollo's care defends;

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\* The most singular composition of the kind is the gem figured by Raspe (No. 3169), where Minerva rides a novel Centaur, made up of Virgo holding the Balance, and Aries.



Cyllenian Hermes o'er the Crab presides,  
 Jove with Cybele the fierce Lion guides;  
 The Virgin with her sheaf is Ceres' dower,  
 The artful Balance owns swart Vulcan's power;  
 Still close to Mars the spiteful Scorpion's seen,  
 The Centaur hunter claims the sylvan queen;  
 Whilst Capricorn's shrunk stars old Vesta loves,  
 The Urn is Juno's, aye opposed to Jove's;  
 And Neptune o'er the scaly race supreme,  
 Knows his own Fishes in the falling stream."

The proper influence of each planet when not thwarted, or modified by others of a contrary nature, is thus set forth by Manetho (A. 101):—

"Jove gives the victor athlete to the light;  
 Venus high-priests arrayed in purple bright;  
 Whilst Saturn's rays the noble edile crown,  
 Mars the bold leader covers with renown;  
 The consul, Sol; Luna, the magistrate;  
 Mercury the ruler of his native state."

It is probable that, in later times at least, the figures of the Zodiac were worn for the protection against disease and accident of the parts of the body under their respective influences. For each member was allotted to some particular Sign, a belief that can be traced back to the remotest antiquity, and which can hardly be called yet extinct. Manilius thus portions out to them the empire of the microcosm:—

"Hear how each Sign the body's portions sways,  
 How every part its proper lord obeys;  
 And what the member of the human frame  
 Wherein to rule their several forces claim.  
 First, to the Ram the *head* hath been assigned,  
 Lord of the sinewy *neck* the Bull we find;  
 The *arms* and *shoulders* joined in union fair  
 Possess the Twins, each one an equal share.  
 The Crab as sovereign o'er the *breast* presides,  
 The Lion rules the *shoulder-blades* and *sides*;  
 Down to the *flank* the Virgin's lot descends,  
 And with the *buttocks* Libra's influence ends.  
 The fiery Scorpion in the *groin* delights,  
 The Centaur in the *thighs* exerts his rights;  
 Whilst either *knee* doth Capricornus rule,  
 The *legs* the province of Aquarius cool;  
 Last the twain Fishes, as their region meet,  
 Hold jurisdiction on the pair, the *feet*."

The astrologer Hephæstion expressly states that "the star Chnumis in the breast of Leo is good against all diseases of the chest;" and Salmasius ('De An. Clim.') quotes a Greek author citing Teucer to the effect that the figures of the Decani, or three chief stars in each Sign, used to be worn in rings as amulets against disease and accident. These Decani Scaliger\* with good reason recognises in the strange winged genii holding one or more Signs in each hand that occur so numerous upon the Gnostic stones. Such were the "constellation stones" of the mediæval astrologer, the robbery of which Sidrophel lays to the knight's charge:—

"My moon-dial and Napier's bones,  
And several constellation stones."

It is true the Arabian astrologers talk of these Zodiacal gems as defending the wearer against the attacks of the particular beast figured upon each; thus Leo protects from lions and wild beasts; Scorpio from scorpions and reptiles, &c.; but an interpretation so extremely materialistic was certainly not in vogue with the ancients. I am more inclined to accept Camillo di Leonardo's rules,† believed in with implicit faith during the Middle Ages, and which, though received immediately from the Arabians, had, in all likelihood, been

\* In his notes on 'Manilius,' Book v.

† Given in his 'Speculum Lapidum,' written about 1502, but compiled from much older sources.

His distribution is very ancient, for we have a fragment of Dorotheus to the same effect.

"On Trines.—The Ram, the Shaggy Lion, and the Bender of the Bow, by day belong to the Sun, by night to Jupiter, in turns; but malign Saturn hath allotted to him the third share, that of the Bull.

"Over the Virgin and Capricorn rule by day the Daughter of Ocean, and by night the goddess Moon, and third in partnership with them the god who ruleth over battles; and in the Virgin he has taken for ally the Son of Maia.

"In the Twins, the Balance, and the icy Urn-bearer, the day lord is Saturn, and the nightly one Mercury; but, after these, Jupiter has a place meted out to him.

"Again, the Crab, the Scorpion, and last of all, the Fishes, Venus hath gotten for the day, Mars for the night; and, after these, they are held by the round-faced Queen, the Moon."



handed down by tradition from the schools of Chaldæa. "Astrologers divide the Signs of the Zodiac into four *Trines*, each composed of three agreeing in their active and passive qualities. They assign one Trine to each of the four elements, and also a lord presiding over each.

First Trine, of Fire, Aries, Leo, Sagittarius, belongs to the East. Its lords are, Sol by day, Jupiter by night, Saturn at dawn. Hence a gem engraved with *any one* of the above Signs is good against all cold diseases, such as lethargy, palsy, and dopsy; and makes the wearer eloquent, ingenious, and cheerful, and exalts him to honour and dignity. Amongst these the figure of the lion is the most potent, that Sign being the house of the sun.

Second Trine, of the Earth, Taurus, Virgo, Capricornus, belongs to the South. Its lords are, Venus by day, Luna by night, Mars at dawn. These figures are good against all hot and moist diseases such as quinsy and corruption of the blood. Their wearers are inclined towards rural avocations and the laying out of gardens and vineyards.

Third Trine, of the Air, Gemini, Libra, Aquarius, belongs to the West. Its lords are, Saturn by day, Mercury by night, Jupiter at dawn. Hence a stone engraved with any one of these Signs is good against all cold and dry complaints depending upon a melancholy humour, such as ague, hydrophobia, and loss of memory. From the nature of the lords of this Trine, its wearers are inclined to justice, friendship, and the observance of the laws.

Fourth Trine, of the North, Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces, of a cold and moist nature. Its lords are, Venus by day, Mars by night, Luna at dawn. From its cold and moist complexion, it is good against all hot and dry diseases, such as consumption, inflammation of the liver, and bilious complaints. Its wearers are disposed, through the nature of its lords, towards fickleness, injustice, and lying; and it is said that Scorpio was the horoscope of Mahomet.\*

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\* Cesare Borgia's sapient physician as he penned this must have suspected the same Trine had ruled the career of his redoubtable patron.

To trace the origin of this fanciful theory respecting the lords of the Signs, we must go back to India, the true fountain-head of every mystery of the ancient world. In the pictures of the Hindoo planetary system, each god is mounted upon his appropriate vehicle or "vehan," the agent through which he exerts his power. The Sun, *Surya*, rides a lion; but his car, drawn by his seven-headed horse, is guided underneath him by his charioteer, *Arun*. The Moon, *Chandra*, has his (for he is the Deus Lunus) wain drawn by an antelope, parent of the Greek Artemis' silver bulls; Mercury, *Buddha*, bestrides an eagle; Venus, *Sukra* or *Asanas* (a male deity), a camel or a rat; Mars, *Mangala*, a horse or a ram; Jupiter, *Vrihaspati*, a boar; Saturn, *Sani*, an elephant or a raven. The Dragon's Head, *ketu*, is supported upon a frog; the Dragon's Tail is figured by a headless man, black, holding a spear and standing upon a tortoise. Of the Signs, however, their representations (making allowance for the difference of the Indian treatment in the attitudes and costume) exactly coincide with the Roman types of the same, and may have come to both from a common, *i.e.*, a Magian source.

In the groups on Roman gems above alluded to, Sol's hieroglyphic is an eight-rayed star,\* the planets being expressed by their respective attributes placed over smaller stars. Thus the caduceus stands for Mercury, the dove for Venus, the spear for Mars, and so forth. Salmاسius, however (*l. c.*), quotes a Greek author to the effect that the *ancients* denoted Saturn by the figure of an *ass*;† Jupiter by an eagle; Mars, a wolf; Sol, a lion; Venus, a dove; Mercury, a serpent; Luna, a cow.

Scaliger gives (*l. c.*), as borrowed by the Arabian astrologers from the ancient Egyptian, according to their own account, a catalogue of

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\* Which placed within a crescent is the common symbol of eternity in all Persian art, from the earliest to the latest, expressing the idea "as long as the sun and the moon endureth."

† Here is the true source of the persuasion of the Romans that the hidden god of the Jews was thus personified; for the Rabbins allowed that Saturn was the inspirer of Moses.



the strangest figures and groups imaginable, intended to express pictorially the influence of each particular one of the thirty degrees in every Sign upon the horoscope of him born under it. Such tables were termed *Myriogeneses Signorum*, a corruption of *Moriogeneses*, or the aspects of the individual *parts*, i. e., the degrees. Most, however, of these descriptions, have a very mediæval air; for example, "a man holding a *cross-bow* in his right hand," a weapon unknown to the ancients.\* Nevertheless, a group here and there reminds the reader of some amongst the inexplicable designs that adorn the talismanic stones of the Lower Empire.

Although the planets are often expressed by their emblems, as above remarked, yet neither they nor the Signs are ever to be seen represented on antique works by those symbols, or rather hieroglyphics, so familiar to the modern eye in our almanacs. Whenever such occur upon a stone, it may be pronounced, without any hesitation, a production of the Cinque-cento or the following century, which poured forth astrological gems† with a profusion equal to that of the imperial period, and with good cause, for the belief in the pretensions of the science was then fully as universal and as strong as in any age of the ancient empire. As for the source of these hieroglyphs, I have never been able to trace it. They are to be found exactly as we use them in very old mediæval MSS., and there is good reason to suspect they were devised by the Arab sages, the masters in astrology to mediæval Europe, and that they originated in their religious prejudice against

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\* Anna Comnena speaks of it as a novelty, under the barbarous name of *τζάρυπα*, carried by some amongst the first crusaders.

† It would seem that the Arabians took up the making of talismans when the art was extinct in Christendom, for Petrus Arlensis ('De Symp. Metal,' ix.) states "that they make rings, images, and sigils, according to the triple sympathy of heaven, earth, and air. They hold that Saturn works to the augmentation of wealth; Jupiter, of dignities; Mars, against wars," &c. Here, then, is a reasonable explanation for the existence of so many barbarous figures of the old gods, which it is scarcely possible to imagine executed in the times of good taste when their religion flourished. And in the "figures" made under the triple sympathy, we may recognise those strange monsters in which Von Hammer fancied he had discovered the Baphometic idols of the Templars.

the representation of the human form; a feeling which actually led them to substitute new figures of their own invention for certain of the Greek constellations, as well as for some of the Signs—as Gemini, Virgo, and Aquarius. Gemini they Mahometanized into twin peacocks; Virgo into a wheat-sheaf; Aquarius into a mule carrying two buckets. For the constellation Ophiuchus, they substituted a stork; for Andromeda, a sea-calf; for Engonasin, a saddled camel. Of our own conventional figures, some are obviously enough the rude outline of the actual object, or a part thereof, as  $\Upsilon$  for the Ram's head & for the Bull's,  $\Xi$  for the Crab's claws; but how  $\eta$  comes to represent the Virgin's wing, or  $\mu$  the Scorpion, is impossible for the liveliest imagination to conceive. Of the planets,  $\odot$  is explained as the wheel of Sol's car,  $\mercury$  as Mercury's caduceus, and  $\venus$  as Venus's mirror. Mars has his shield and spear represented by  $\mars$ , and Jupiter his right arm and thunderbolt by  $\jupiter$ , according to the received explanation, but I cannot help fancying the two latter originated in the cursive Greek contractions for their names,  $\Thetaεύριος$ \* and  $Ζεύς$ , viz.,  $\theta$  and  $\zeta$  as they actually stand in that early Greek type used in Camerarius's Hephæstion.

A favourite device for a signet was the moon surrounded by seven stars, or the Septentriones, Charles's Wain, which first appears as a type on a denarius of Fulcinus *Trio*, who took it as the rebus upon his own name, with the usual fondness of the later Republicans for such conceits. The same type is found afterwards on reverses of medals of certain empresses—Sabina and Faustina—hence gems so engraved may, with some probability, be assumed to have been the signets of ladies. Then again, we meet with that most ancient form of Babylonian symbolism already noticed, the crescent enclosing the sun-star, forming the sole occupant of the signet-field. Perhaps the wearer of such a type believed himself placed, in virtue of the sigil, under the protection

\* The Greek astrologers generally designate the planets by their epithets alone, Mercury by  $\Sigmaτίλβων$ , Venus by  $\Piωφίη$ , Jupiter by  $\Phiαίδων$ , Mars by  $\Θούριος$  or  $\Πυροεὶς$ , Saturn by  $\Phiαίνων$ .



of all the astral powers at once; or rather, such a device may only have indicated the professional seal of a Magus.\*

Of coins bearing astrological reverses, the most curious is the denarius of Pescennius Niger, with the globe supported upon the conjoined figures of Taurus and Capricorn, an evident allusion to his surname of *Justus*, for Virgo, *Astræa*, is often figured similarly enthroned. Certain of the large medals of Antoninus Pius, from the Alexandrian mint have for reverse some god's bust coupled with one of the Signs; others, Serapis surrounded by the heads of the planetary deities, and encircled by the Zodiac. A very analogous design is repeated on gems. Caylus publishes one example, I know of a second in the Bosanquet collection, and there was a third in the Praun (perhaps a copy), on an Egyptian emerald. In this design, the centre bust is easily recognisable as Jove's, the supporters are the Dioscuri; but the others it is more difficult to attribute to the right personages. Barthelémy explains the medal-type as exhibiting the relative positions of all the planets at the commencement of a *Sothiac Period*. This name is derived from *Sothis* (Sirius), the star whose heliacal rising regulated all the Egyptian festivals, as their year consisted of three hundred and sixty-five days exactly. The remaining fraction not being taken into account, would cause this rising of Sirius to fall upon each day of the year in a cycle of 1460 Julian years, which, therefore, constitutes a *Sothiac Period*, i.e., "The Revolution of Sothis." One of these, according to Cæsalpinus, began A.D. 138, the date of the accession of Antoninus Pius, and the hopes of better times caused it to be commemorated on the mintages of the new emperor, like the "*Felix temporum Reparatio*" of Constantine's family—a promise so woefully belied by the event.

Iarchus, the Brachman, presented his guest, Apollonius Tyanens, with seven rings, each named after a planet, and to be worn on its

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\* By dexterously drawing thick lines from star to star, astrologers managed to convert the constellations into all the Hebrew letters, and thus form a "Celestial Alphabet," to be read by the wise. Two plates of this true Book of the Heavens are published by Gaffarel, librarian to Card. Richelieu in his 'Curiosités Inouyes,' 1632.

proper day: by so doing the philosopher preserved his bodily vigour and good looks beyond his hundredth year. It would be curious to know how the days of the week (a division of time thus early noticed) were distinguished, probably by the attributes of the respective deities presiding over each.\*

\* This is unquestionably done upon a gem of mine, intended for an amulet against the Evil Eye, for that dreaded object forms the centre, whence radiate seven symbols, the lion for dies Solis, stag for d. Lunæ, scorpion for d. Martis, &c. Dio Cassius is the first historian to compute time by the days of the week under their present names, a practice borrowed from the Egyptian almanac-makers.







## SIGNA ORIENTIA.

Nor yet when thou the Parts hast scanned each one,  
 Remit thy care nor deem thy labour done;  
 For in brief space, by some mutation strange,  
 Their proper powers the orient Signs exchange.  
 Those virtues, which at first diffused their sway,  
 In their ascent grow weak and fade away.  
 Thus when the Ram from ocean's wave shall rise,  
 And with protruded neck ascend the skies,  
 With horned front bent backwards, then the breed  
 Springs up, aye cankered with insatiate greed.  
 Strangers to shame, but gold their only thought,  
 And their sole joy the wealth by rapine sought.  
 Just as the butting Ram no force can tame,  
 Headlong he pushes, in no place the same;  
 So though soft luxury melt their angry mood,  
 Yet restless still they joy to roam abroad,  
 Through cities new to rove, strange seas to view,  
 And o'er the world, mere guests, their way pursue.

Witness the fleecy Lord himself, who clave  
With locks of gold the glassy Pontic wave ;  
And Phryxus, mourning for his sister, bore  
To Phasis and his goal the Colchian shore.

The native born beneath the ascendant Bull,  
Unmanly, soft, shall live of luxury full.  
Nor far hast thou to seek to find the cause  
(If 'tis allowed to assign to Nature laws),  
Backwards he mounts the skies, a female train,  
The crowded Pleiads, his broad flanks sustain.  
But rural wealth shall be through life his share,  
And his fat furrows feel their fostering care.

But when the waves the Twins half show, half hide,  
To study and to learned arts they guide.  
No gloomy churl he 'neath their radiance born,  
But wit with mirth combines his soul to adorn :  
Him voice mellifluous and the sounding lyre  
Grant the kind stars, and high poetic fire.

But when dark Cancer rides obscured in clouds,  
And his dim star in densest darkness shrouds,  
Like to the flame, which paled by Sol's strong ray,  
Loses its life, and, smouldering, pines away,  
So shall the life desert the nascent head ;  
A double fate, no sooner born than dead.

If o'er the waves his front fierce Leo show,  
And mount, with gaping jaws, the etherial bow,  
Him shall his sire, him shall his offspring blame,  
And for his squandered fortunes curse his name.  
His wealth he buries in his greedy maw,  
Slave to a gluttony that knows no law ;  
Not e'en himself, so vast his hunger's rage,  
Though swallowed piecemeal could his want assuage !



His funeral's cost, his tomb ancestral's price,  
Dissolve in feasts and glut his darling vice.

Erigone, who ruled the Golden Age, /  
But fled the world of growing vice the stage,  
She in her rising grants imperial power,  
And loftiest rank attends the auspicious hour.  
A legislator grave that child shall shine,  
Or, pure and chaste, attend the sacred shrine.

But when fierce Scorpio's claws begin to rise  
And distant glimmer in autumnal skies;  
Thrice happy he, who 'neath the equal sway  
Of Libra first beholds the light of day:  
Of life and death the judge supreme he'll stand,  
And pass his laws to yoke the obedient land;  
Cities and states shall tremble at his nod,  
And, done with earth, he rules the heavens, as god.

Whoe'er is born beneath the favouring sky  
When Scorpio rears his flamy tail on high,  
He shall the world with new-built cities crown  
And trace the circuit of the rising town;  
Or ancient ramparts in the dust lay low,  
And give their sites back to the rustic plough,  
O'er ruined houses bid ripe corn to wave,  
And Ceres flourish on a nation's grave:  
So great the virtue by his star assigned,  
And such the force still with its virtue joined.

Thus when the arrowy Centaur 'gins to rise  
And waves his mantle through the stormy skies,  
Heroes he gives, and high renown in war,  
And lofty triumphs in the victor's car;  
Here, walls to raise with towers aspiring crowned,  
Here, ancient bulwarks level to the ground.

But too-indulgent Fortune, jealous grown,  
With front malignant on his end shall frown.  
By change like this, the Punic chief, dismayed,  
Long ere his exile for his victories paid ;  
And as beneath her vengeful hand he groaned,  
For Trebia, Cannæ, Thrasimene, atoned.

But when receding Capricornus shows  
The star that in his tail's bright summit glows,  
He bids the native dare the raging seas,  
A hardy sailor live, and spurn inglorious ease.

Dost thou desire a son pure, holy, chaste,  
With probity, with every virtue graced ?  
Such shall be born (nor deem the omen vain)  
When first Aquarius rises from the main.

But ah ! may not thine offspring reach the light  
When the twin Fishes first illumine the night,  
The ever-restless, poisonous tongue they bear  
Aye new-forged slanders whispering in each ear.  
Born in this point, no faith the native knows,  
But burns with lust, and through the furnace goes.  
For when she plunged in deep Euphrates' waves  
A fish's form the flying Venus saves,  
'Scaping the furious Typhon, monster dread,  
With serpent-legs, with dragon-wings outspread.  
The goddess yet holds fast her chosen place  
And fills with her own fires the scaly race.  
Nor singly comes the birth beneath this Sign,  
For even twins the Fishes twain assign ;  
Or if a female child they give to thee,  
Mother of twins in after-life she'll be.





#### SUBJECTS OF THE DESIGNS ON GEMS.

EVERY experienced collector must have remarked the frequency with which particular subjects are repeated upon gems; many, indeed, from causes obvious enough upon a little consideration of their nature; whilst, on the other hand, the paucity of certain types, apparently possessing fully equal claims to the engraver's attention, is extremely difficult to account for in a satisfactory way. He will at the same time have observed that particular subjects seem to have a preference for special kinds of the material; which affinity between type and stone often appears to indicate a curious connection of ideas in the antique mind concerning the fitness of things. The pursuit of this inquiry brings out matter of much interest to the archæologist; I shall therefore attempt in this chapter to give a relative view of the occurrence of the more ordinary types, and of the varieties of material that each class may be thought more peculiarly to affect.

First, beyond all dispute, in point of number, are the figures of *Victory*; executed in every style (except the extreme Archaic), from that of the best period, down to the rude scratches that mark the struggles of expiring art. Almost as frequently is presented *Nemesis*,

that warning impersonation of the idea so justly revered in the ancient world; in form only to be distinguished from Victory by the attributes, bridle and measuring-rod, carried in her hands, speaking emblems of self-restraint and due measurement of one's own powers.

*Fortuna*, the same goddess, regarded in another point of view, is to be recognised by her rudder, or her wheel, attributes declaring her influence over man's career, and her instability. The latter symbol she holds upright with her hand: to depict the goddess *standing* upon it was the inelegant conception of the Revival, and always betrays the work of that too prolific school.

*Erigone*, who is at once the virgin Astræa, and the Virgo of the Zodiac, though much resembling in figure both divinities already noticed, may yet be discriminated by the *helmet* she usually wears, to mark her for the Maid of Marathon, and the wheat-ears carried in her hand; harvest time falling within the portion of the year over which her stars preside. Sometimes she bears the Balance, which comes next in the Zodiac, and then assumes the character of the Goddess of Justice. People very often took their own horoscope for their seal device: a conspicuous example is Augustus's Capricorn put on his coinage.

All the foregoing subjects belong to every period, and take to themselves every material, from the most precious to the meanest; but they swarm under the later Empire, when they become extremely common on the plasma, the *jaspis* of the times.

Next to Victory, by a natural association, comes the Roman *Eagle*, in all attitudes, accompanied with a variety of attributes, and occupying materials that follow the same law as those of his patroness. It is inconceivable why so few should exhibit Greek workmanship—the king of birds having been the regular device of the Ptolemies, as was Apollo of the Selencidæ, from the first foundation of those dynasties. And Arcius, king of Sparta, tells us expressly, in his letter to the High Priest Onias, that his own seal was an eagle grasping a serpent in his talons.

*Venus*, partly as the progenitrix of the Cæsars, yet more so as protectress of the fair sex, obtained place upon as many signets, with



the Romans as did the Imperial bird himself; but usually in her character of *Victrix*, bearing palm and helmet, the special "Tutela" of the great Julius. The sea-born goddess claims, with justice, for her seat, the gem "that mimics the ocean wave," to use Martial's expression for the sea-green plasma; and in virtue of this appropriation the same material is generally devoted to all varieties of amatory scenes. So close is the restriction, that when other subjects than those already noticed occur on plasma, they will as a rule be found to betray a Cinque-cento or a modern hand.

*Cupids*, as a necessary consequence, are equally multitudinous on gems, and give full scope to the artist's fancy in portraying their ever-varied attitudes and groups, as engaged in every sportive occupation, of which marine avocations and gambols naturally form the chief. The little God of Love often here usurps the attributes of all the other deities at once, to set forth his uncontrolled sovereignty over heaven and earth. Wielding Jove's thunderbolt, he was the apt device that Alcibiades emblazoned on his shield—no wonder therefore this particular type should be so plentifully reproduced upon gems. The winged Boy, when engraved for a wealthy votary, has occasionally selected for his shrine the then so highly-valued *pæderos* (rose-coloured almandine), recommended by the elegant affinity between name and subject of gem.

*Minerva* holds a high place on our list, and as may be deduced from their style, her representations gave full employment to the engraver under the Flavian family, for most of the numerous, neatly-executed intagli with the goddess, appear identical in manner with the figures of her, his patron-goddess, upon the mintage of Domitian.

*Urbs Roma*, only to be distinguished from *Minerva* (with whom at the origin she was synonymous in the Palladium) when she is seated on a throne and holds the orb and sceptre of the world, is almost the sole reflex of better times that faintly illuminates the last productions of the Lower Empire.

But of no antique idea do glyptic embodiments more largely abound than of the special attribute of the Goddess of Wisdom, the *Gorgon's*

*Head.* Whether as the Dying Medusa, in profile usually,—that model of voluptuous expiring beauty in which the greatest masters of every period have loved to vie with each other—or the living, full-faced Gorgon, with snake locks erect, and every feature distorted with terror and rage—this mystic form shows itself, more particularly in its latter rendering, down to the last glimpses of the glyptic art in Byzantine practice. Adopted as a Gnostic sigil, and rendered yet more terrific by the seven monstrous asps radiating from it, the symbol was probably tortured into the type of *Achamoth*, and her seven Emanations, the Planetary æons; for the serpent, in the mythology of Egypt, symbolised a planet by its tortuous progression. In its original form, as Pausanias beheld it “sculptured by the Cyclops,” to guard the Acropolis of Argos, or as it still glares upon us in the metopes of Selinus and the Etruscan tomb-sculptures, it is truly Lucan’s “*facies Erebi*” of the blood-drinking Hecate, Queen of the Shades, whose ancient appellations were actually *Gorgò* and *Mormò* (as appears from the magician’s hymn preserved by Hippolytus), a sufficient reason why the latter epithet ultimately came to signify no more than a frightful mask. This pristine type (for the dying and beautiful one was the subsequent creation of Praxiteles) is identical, if we make allowance for Grecian rendering, with the head of Bhavani, Siva’s consort, the Queen of Hell, and may well be a traditional copy of the Hindoo prototype, that embodied idea of the destructive Principle of Nature. The Indian idol similarly displays the wings on the temples, the eyeballs starting from their sockets, the protruded tongue, and the asps tied about the neck. Observe, too, the legend makes Perseus bring his trophy from *Ethiopia*, that vague designation for the far East. K. O. Müller maintains, as above stated, that it certainly was not before the time of Praxiteles that the pristine grotesque hideousness was softened down into the form, deeply concealed under grace and voluptuousness, of the annihilating death-agony. With such a feeling must have been sculptured in gold and ivory that “*Gorgonis os pulcherrimum cinctum anguibus*,” which the “terrible amateur,” Verres, as Cicero phrases it, “*revellit atque abstulit*” from the sumptuous



doors of the Syracusan Pallas (iv. 56). Timomachus of Byzantium, a contemporary of Julius Cæsar's, rested his reputation upon a painting of the subject—"præcipuè tamen ars ei fuisse in *Gorgone visa est*" (Plin. xxxvi. 30)—as did Leonardo da Vinci in his early masterpiece at Florence, the source of innumerable copies in the succeeding century, and to which, indeed, nearly all the cameo Medusas in three-quarter face ought to be referred. Such being the idea carried in the type, what better amulet could be worn to shield the person from the ever-dreaded stroke of the evil eye? And so Lucian,\* in his *Philopatris* (c. 7), makes Tryphon inquire the motive for its appearance upon Minerva's shield; who is informed by Crates "that it is an object which averts all dangers," *θέαμα ἀποτροπεπτικὸν τῶν δεινῶν*; an explanation rendered a certainty by a gem of my own with the Gorgonion inscribed, ΑΡΗΓΩ ΡΟΡΟΜΑΝΔΑΡΗ, "I protect Rhoromandares," thus declaring the purpose of the amulet. As such is it introduced into Homer's picture of the same goddess arming herself for the combat (Il. v. 74),

'εν δὲ τε Γοργείη κεφαλὴ δεινοῦ πελόρου:†

which noble episode was the source of all the representations of Minerva's equipment when pictured in subsequent times. Eckhel ('*Pierres Gravées*,' p. 62), in noticing the frequent introduction of this figure upon the shields of heroes, as a means of striking terror into the foe, adds, "C'est vraisemblablement pour cette raison qu'on trouve un si grand nombre de têtes de Méduse, sur des pierres de toute espèce, destinées la plupart à servir d'amulettes."‡

\* The Byzantine of that name, always confounded with the satirist of Samosata. The *Philopatris* must have been written under Justinian. The congratulations with which it concludes, upon the fall of Babylon, the reduction of Egypt, defeat of the Persians, and repression of the Scythian incursions, are identical, almost word for word, with the expressions in two epigrams in honour of the same emperor ('*Anth. Planud.*' iv. 61, 62).

† Which verse Sextus Empiricus prescribes as a most efficacious charm for relieving any one choking from a morsel sticking in his throat.

‡ The importance attached to this type by the Christian Romans has been recently placed in a most conspicuous light by the discovery of the double colossal Medusa, close by the Burnt Column, Constantinople. The face is seven feet from chin to brow, the upper part wanting, sculptured in the still grandiose, though debased, style of the

Now succeed the train of Bacchus—the mature and bearded figure of archaic art, but more commonly the boyish and effeminate ideal of later taste: the former the Indian *Dionysos*, and the Roman *Liber Pater*, perhaps Siva under his title *Devanisi*, for his Mysteries, the Greeks themselves allow, were direct importations from the Ganges. His foster-father, Silenus, with his Fauns, Satyrs, and Nymphs, disport themselves at full length upon the gem, or merely display their heads or busts; often affecting the amethyst, that fancied antidote to their own influence, but more particularly the blood-red sard, and most of all the vermilion jasper. The last stone by its colour manifested a kindred nature to the *rosy* god, whose rustic figures, like the primitive idols, continued to the last to be besmeared with red-ochre (*μαλτός*), according to the ancient practice. Pausanias (ii. 2.5) was shown at Corinth, amongst the most noteworthy remains of antiquity, “a wooden image of *Dionysos*, covered with gold-leaf all over except the face, and *that* coated with red paint.” It was probably in honour of the festive god that the early Romans were accustomed to mix vermilion with all the unguents they anointed their faces with on days of rejoicing; whilst the Consul himself, whenever he triumphed, rode with his countenance illuminated with the same fiery pigment. The rural custom explains Virgil’s picture:—

“Pan, deus Arcadiæ, venit quem vidimus ipsi,  
Sanguineis ebuli baccis minioque rubentem.”

As for Silenus, his laughter-stirring visage was, from some reason now lost, esteemed a potent amulet. This is proved from its forming an essential part of almost every GRYLUS\* or astrological talisman,

Decline. These heads formed the front and back face to one immense stone, nine feet wide, manifestly, from its shape, the key-stone of an arch, supposed to have been the entrance to the Forum of Constantine. The same belief in its protective power explains its appearance on some gold and silver coins of Severus, with the legend *PROVIDENTIA*.

\* Especially prominent in that favourite one, an *Elephant’s Head* carrying in its trunk a palm, a torch, or a caduceus. The elephant belongs to Bacchus as an Indian conqueror—which may explain its adoption as a vehicle for Dionysiac emblems, and the accompanying attributes all plainly bearing reference to those Mysteries.



perhaps as passing for the emblem of universal knowledge. In primitive Greek art, Pan, Satyrs, Fauns, are represented alike in the complete human form, with only the ears, tail, and feet of a goat. But Roman art works a great metamorphosis in the two first, equipping them with the legs and horns of the same beast in addition, the Fauns alone continuing as before. The Etruscan types of these rustic semi-gods were necessarily identical with those of the early Greeks, their tutors in art. *Faunus* indeed is but the Italic version of the Pelasgic Πάν. At Nymphæum in Apollonia were two inflammable springs always blazing, by the side of which a Satyr, "exactly like those in pictures," was caught asleep, and brought before Sylla when encamped in that region. His voice was a mixture of neighing and bleating, but no articulate speech. Sylla, horror struck, ordered the monster to be taken out of his sight immediately (Plut. 'Sylla'). Could this have been a baboon, some last survivor of the prehistoric *fauna* of the country, like the lions that lingered in Northern Greece down to the invasion of Xerxes?\*

But to return to the great god himself—the grave, bearded, Indian apostle of the Mysteries (perhaps at first the long-gowned Buddhist missionary traversing Greece with his motley companions from the distant East), was not converted into the smooth-faced effeminate youth before the days of Praxiteles. It is in the former character alone that he appears upon gems surrounded with the "Etruscan border;" an additional evidence that works so enclosed are prior to the epoch of Alexander. And again, the besotted, bloated visage, expressive of nothing but beery drunkenness, is assigned to Bacchus by modern art alone. Such a gross conception of the character is ludicrously repugnant to the ancient idea which expressed either profound gravity or else frenzied inspiration—never the unmeaning booziness of Teutonic taste.

From Statius's allusion to the golden statue of Lucan, modelled after the life for his widow, Polla (*ante*, p. 218), we learn it was

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\* Or the large apes still haunting the inaccessible heights of the Rock of Gibraltar.

then the custom to represent a deceased friend under the form of Bacchus.\* The same is proved by the Lateral Antinous, a colossal Bacchus, and by a matchless example of our special art, the nicolo already described, with his bust with a thyrsus, intaglio, within a frame of Bacchantes and Satyrs in relief. This custom leads to the suspicion that persons initiated into the Mysteries bore in token thereof the figure of the patron-god; and another powerful motive for placing oneself under the tutelage of the same benevolent deity was undoubtedly that announced by Horace:—

“ — Ornatus viridi tempora pampino,  
Bacchus vota bonum ducit ad exitum.”

“ The god who crowns with vine leaves green his brows,  
Bacchus, to happy issue brings our vows.”

*Masks*, and masked actors are equally plentiful, and take to themselves the same cognate materials as does the divinity to whose service they were in the beginning especially dedicated.

*Mercury* has been thus far omitted, although in truth he ought to have obtained equal precedence in the list with Victory herself; the god of gain, Homer's ἐπιούριος *Ἐπυρις*, being naturally the most widely worshipped of deities in every age; not to mention the value of his patronage in the next world in his capacity of “Psychopompos,” *guide of souls*. It may even be shrewdly suspected, from the debased style of many of his figures on gems, that he retained his hold upon the *fingers* at least of many a new Christian, who, upon conversion, had found no difficulty in casting off all other idols of more spiritual and unworldly character. For some mystic reason the

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\* This practice is clearly exemplified by Statius (v. i. 230), who states that Abascantius caused his wife Priscilla to be embalmed and laid, richly robed, in a sarcophagus full of spices, whilst her tomb was surrounded by her statues, in the characters of Ceres, *Ariadæ*, Maia, and Venus Caelestis:

“ — mox in varias mutata novaris  
Effigies; hoc ære Ceres, hoc lucida Gnossis,  
Illo Maia tholo, Venus hoc non improba saxo,  
Accipiunt vultus haud indignata decoros  
Numina.”



*amethyst* (specially recommended by the Magi for talismans) seems to have been considered highly acceptable to this god, judging from the frequency with which that particular stone is the vehicle of his figure.

*Hercules*, as the Power whose favour insured good luck, as Persius hints—

. . . . . "O, si  
Sub rastro crepet argenti mihi seria dextro  
Hercule!" . . . . .

was a particular favourite with the Romans of the Middle Empire; for numerous fine heads of him attest their own date by being found engraved on the *nicolo* (blue and black onyx), a material altogether unknown to the Greek school. And, again, in early art, *Hercules* as *Sandon*, founder of the royal line of Lydia, and of that of her colonists in Umbria, fills by far the most prominent place in all the monuments of the Etruscan school. Heads of the hero covered with the Nemæan Lion's hide, and those of his imperious mistress, *Omphale*, similarly arrayed in his spoils, have exercised the highest talent of the Imperial Roman period, although such works are far inferior in number to their modern copies; the subject having been a special favourite with engravers from the Revival downwards. Of his successor, *Theseus*, the portrait may be recognised by its youthful cast of countenance, and by the hide of the Marathonian Bull, which forms its sylvan headpiece.\*

Of *Jupiter*, the bust shown in front-face is not unfrequent; more rarely found are his full-length figures, whether enthroned or erect; an unaccountable deficiency, seeing how common a type upon the Greek coinage were the representations of this god. *Serapis*, however (who, whether regarded as Jove himself, or his brother lord of the lower world, or, lastly, as the Solar Power and nothing more, almost engrossed the devotion of the later Roman mind), necessarily arrogates to himself an immense number of fine gems, particularly camei in

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\* Which costume suggested to the editors of the 'Orleans Gems' the ludicrous interpretation, "Hercule coiffé de la peau du fleuve Achelous!"

the class of heads; whilst in intaglio the same deity displays himself upon the deepest blood-red sards (chosen in allusion to the Indian signification of his name, the *Blood-drinker*) our collections offer, and for the same reason upon the red jasper. As presiding over the subterranean world and its treasures, it was a matter of course that he should be propitiated by this species of homage to his divinity.

*Ammon* is a character of Jupiter that is very rarely to be met with, and then only in works of early date. But, by an ingenious turn of flattery, the portrait of the reigning emperor was often made to combine the three ideas of Jupiter Olympius, Ammon, and Serapis, all at once, to indicate the universality of his beneficent power; of which triple deification the grand Marlborough cameo of Commodus and Marcia (as Ceres) affords the most conspicuous example.

*Apollo* follows Serapis in point of popularity; on the early gems, as the Pythian, lord of oracles and poetry; but on the later, chiefly as Phœbus, genius of the sun. Common in like degree are his attributes; the raven, as minister of augury; *lyres*, often made up out of different symbols in fantastic yet ever graceful outlines; and *gryphons*,\* combination of the sun's own creatures, eagles and lions, supporting a wheel, type of his annual revolution.

His sister goddess is much less frequent; in her earliest figures she is the mere huntress; later, as the lunar deity, she leads a cow, or is drawn in a car by stags, as the Indian *Chandra* is by white antelopes; and in the Decline she is figured as the triple-bodied Hecate on gems only intended for amulets. But the Artemis of Ephesus, a Pantheistic emblem of Nature, having nothing in common with her Grecian namesake except her stags, has often furnished employment to good hands during the Roman period.†

\* The name is merely the Chaldee *cherub* put into Greek letters.

† Diana's stag, however, is more common on Greek and Etruscan gems than on Roman. Yet of this last period I have met with a curious type, cut on a silver ring (Nelthropp), where the stag stands and "draws up by the breath of his nostrils a serpent out of its hole," as Pliny relates the fable. The notion, perhaps, allegorically expressed the antagonism of the principles of heat and cold, of which the stag and



*Juno* makes her appearance even more coyly than *Diana* herself: doubtless their characters were too prudish and severe to suit the taste of the times producing the bulk of the gems that come under our notice. Her *Peacock*, however, found favour as a lady's signet even from Etruscan times.

The "infinite variety" of *Chimeræ*, or *Gryllæ* and similar fanciful combinations of the most heterogeneous members (many of which are declared by the nature of their components to be purely astrological talismans,\*) emanate, for the most part, from one and the same period, the second century, as may be deduced from the strong family resemblance in the style and execution of the entire class. Their almost special material, the red jasper, certainly did not come into fashion before Hadrian's reign, and that emperor's cultivation of astrology must have greatly stimulated the manufacture of all things pertaining to the science. To the same category are to be referred the so-called *symbolic rings*, which, from their elegant composition and frequent occurrence, appear to have been greatly in vogue, at a period, too, when good taste had still much to do with the choice of the signet device. The work, though always Roman, is frequently minute to an astonishing degree; as the enumeration of the multifarious objects ingeniously grouped together with so limited a space in one of these compositions suffices of itself to prove. Thus, in a certain fine example, we observe the *ring* itself forming the chief subject in the centre of the device to which it gives the title, set with a bearded mask in high relief, and containing within its circle another full-faced mask of *Bacchus*. On the *dexter* side is placed a full *modius*, on the *sinister* a pair of closed tablets, out of both springs a wheat-ear: below all is a grain between two ants, and also a small shell: every object perfectly drawn, and easily distinguishable upon a field barely three-fifths of an

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serpent were respectively the acknowledged types. This curious ring was, in all likelihood, worn as an amulet against the bite of reptiles.

\* Being generally made up out of the symbols of the Four Elements, so combined as to assume the outline of a *horse*, attribute of *Neptune*, or of a *crane*, of *Ceres*. Others take the form of an *elephant's head*, or a *helmet*, significative plainly enough of their protective virtue. (See 'Handbook,' p. 81.)

inch in its longest diameter. In another, the same ring with the cameo Silenus-head (a symbol almost as *virtuous* for an amulet as the Gorgon's own), has its opening filled with a graceful figure of Victory : it is flanked by two full money-bags, one supporting a pigeon—underneath, between two small cabinets, lies an *abacus*, or calculating-table. A third example has the ring bearing upon its top a dolphin, representing, as it would seem, the actual intaglio in its gem ; the sides occupied by a trident and caduceus, emblems telling as plainly as any legend could of the maritime and commercial profession of the owner. Following the same principles of interpretation, a plausible conjecture may be hazarded that our first example sets forth the occupation and resources of an agriculturist, whilst our second served for the advertisement of a money-changer and lender. Such complex devices are no doubt susceptible of a much profounder interpretation if one chose to consider the several parts as symbols of different divinities ; but taking into account the proper destination of signets, the explanation that is most obvious is probably the one nearest to the mark.

*Dextre*, our "hand-in-hand," that natural and universal symbol of plighted faith, abounds upon Roman gems—a necessary result from its being the established ornament of the espousal ring, which for that reason still retains in Italy the traditional name of *fede*. The clasped hands frequently hold a wheat-ear, allusive to the Roman marriage-ceremony, *confarreatio*, which consisted in the couple eating of the wedding cake together ; and in the best finished specimens the purpose of the device is put beyond all doubt by the insertion of the names of bride and bridegroom.\*

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\* A man in *toga* and woman in *stola*, standing facing each other and joining hands, has its meaning explained by the legend *CONCORDIA FELIX*, accompanying such a type on the coins of several empresses (Julia Domna, Plautilla, Annia, &c.). From the frequency of gems with it still extant, it seems to have superseded the *dextre* in the espousal ring. A ring so set was found amongst the jewels of the family of Diomedes, Pompeii. The old pedantic mania for discovering a historical record in every ancient intaglio did not fail to denominate this subject, "The parting of Coriolanus and Volturnia." But what certifies the true meaning of this type more clearly than anything else that can be quoted, is its appearing on a coin of Ilium, with the legend "Anchises, Aphrodite," to designate the happy pair.



But to return to the deities. *Ceres* does not make her appearance half so often as her foster-son *Triptolemus*, known and worshipped by the Roman farmer, wherever he might be settled, as *Bonus Eventus* (a votive tablet to him and Fortune conjointly, has been dug up at Isca Silurum). He is represented as a naked youth, sometimes carrying a dish of fruits in one hand, a bunch of wheat-ears in the other; sometimes as leaning upon his *rutrum*, or mattock. Under the conventional form of this deity of promise the youthful heir-apparent to the Empire was commonly portrayed on the camei of the times: as Germanicus in the Marlborough, Caracalla on the magnificent lapis-lazuli paste of the Townley Cabinet. Pictures of the rural occupations of the ploughman, reaper, shepherd, vine-dresser, &c., are remarkably plentiful amongst the legacies of the Empire, as was natural with a people amongst whom love of a country life ever was so strong a passion. In such scenes the actors are often figured as they actually appeared—or, more poetically, in the guise of Cupids sportively pursuing the same avocations.

*Neptune* is seldom visible, although his Tritons and Nereids are fond of disporting themselves upon gems: conspicuous amongst the latter is *Thetis*, carrying the armour of Achilles, and transported over the waves on the back of a hippocampus. The constant repetition of the sea-god's beloved *Amymone*, pitcher in hand, upon gems of widely different periods, can only be accounted for by supposing her adopted as the emblem of charity, she being figured thus to commemorate her assiduous labours in carrying water to supply the citizens of Argos during a great drought. This good work obtained her redemption from the punishment of her sister Danaides in the other world. Justly popular also amongst mariners was the bust of *Galene* or *Leucothea* (but usually mistaken for Leander), the bringer of fair weather, cleaving the waves, exactly as Tryphon embodied her upon the beryl, immortalised by the poet Addæus. As a companion, we sometimes observe the head of a *Triton*, recognisable by the gills that cross his cheeks, and the fins terminating his shoulders; whilst his steed, that elegant sea monster, the *hippocampus*, with the graceful curves of its long,

piscine body, and shouldering a rudder to denote its authority over the tides, was in still higher estimation as a seal device.

*Saturn* and *Vulcan* were gods whom few took the trouble to propitiate by carrying their visible presentments in their rings; unless where the old Latian deity was adopted for patron by some one bearing the cognomen *Saturninus*, as the *denarii* of the *Sentia* family still show.

That ill-omened type, *Pluto*, except when softened down into *Serapis*, is now unknown amongst glyptic remains; though the anecdote *Suetonius* tells of *Sporus's* ill-timed present to *Nero* (as he was taking the auspices on his last New Year's Day) of a gem engraved with the Rape of *Proserpine*, sufficiently proves that he was not entirely eschewed by the ancient engraver. The *Genius of Death*, however, the Winged Boy leaning upon his inverted torch, frequently warned its wearer of the shortness of life, and the wisdom of enjoying it whilst it lasted. In the same sense, too, must be understood the funereal *Urn*, which in ever-graceful shapes adorns many a fine gem—a "memento mori" equivalent in force to the hideous skull and cross-bones of vulgar Gothicism.

*Mars* was naturally a favourite *sigil* with his own peculiar people. On their signets he appears as the bearded, mature captain, arrayed in armour; but in earlier art as the nude and youthful *Ares*. *Helmets*, also, upon which the engraver has often lavished all his skill, were in especial demand, being apparently supposed to carry in their figure somewhat of the nature of an amulet; a supposition confirmed by the symbolism of the various animals out of whose heads they are frequently made up.

Amongst people so passionately addicted to the hippodrome and circus, *cars* and *horses*, often mounted by fantastic riders, as often caricatured by the substitution of odd birds, insects, fish, for steeds and drivers (thereby acquiring the talismanic virtues of the other *chimærae*), perpetually taxed the artist's fancy, and have come down to us in vast numbers; those of the latter kind manifesting their source by their most usual material, the red jasper.



*Beasts*, both wild and tame, as we have already noticed, constitute the majority of Etruscan subjects, more especially upon the scarabei of earliest make. Examples, too, are not wanting in this class, which by their free and correct drawing fully prove that the school had attained perfection in this branch of art long before it had any success with the human figure. There is also reason for believing that certain animal figures were worn as types of the deities to whom they were assigned (like the *Æsty*i protected by the boar, the badge of *Hertha*), in those early ages when the personifications of the gods themselves were held too sacred for such profanation. Though the same school delighted in attempts, for the most part abortive, at exhibiting the Bacchic train and the sports of the gymnasium, portraiture remained beyond the sphere of their ambition. With their Roman successors, the *lion* and the *bull* were the most popular subjects, from their astrological importance in the Zodiac; yet the *hounds*, *wild boars*, and *deer*, so often repeated, had probably ceased to have deeper meaning in those more prosaic times, but were simply adapted to the predilections of the lovers of the chase. On the other hand, the tame animals, the browsing cow, or the sow in farrow, that so perpetually occur in works of every style and quality, seem to have reference to nothing more than the agricultural avocations of their owners. This manifestly was the source of the innumerable figures of the swine, that animal having first taught mankind the art of ploughing the earth (in Egypt it continued the sole ploughman down to the times of Herodotus), and therefore was made by the Greeks the proper attribute of Ceres. The same notion seems to have been widely spread. Even on the coast of the Baltic, the amber-gatherers, the *Æsty*i, a nation consecrated to *Hertha* (the *Tellus* of the Romans), wore, says Tacitus, the image of a boar as the badge of their profession, protected by which they could pass unmolested amongst all the tribes of Germany. And this belief may account for the common presence of the type on the Gallic and British coinages. The abundance of such types, and of the rural scenes already adverted to, strongly exemplifies the national predilection of the Romans in every age for the tranquil

pleasures of a country life; they breathe the spirit of the poet's apostrophe—

"O rus! quando ego te aspiciam?"

The *Cat* is found on Egyptian gems only, and then as a goddess, *Taf-Net*, not as a domestic animal. That it was kept at all by the ancients in this capacity has been denied by many antiquaries. The *γαλέη*, kept by the Greeks for a mouser, was indeed undeniably some kind of weasel, perhaps an actual ferret. Nevertheless, there is evidence of the true cat's being domesticated in Italy, and at a very early period too. In the "Campana" tomb, Cervetri, which represents in its bas-reliefs and frescoes the atrium of the old *Lucumon's* house, its present tenant (hung round, like the old English gentleman's hall, with implements of war and chase, "pikes and bows, and old bucklers that have borne many shrewd blows"), painted on the ground line is an unmistakable Egyptian cat, with a mouse in her mouth to make all sure. The Tyrrhene trade with Egypt must have introduced the sacred animal into the noble's household. Again, a mosaic lately found at Pompeii, pictures to the life a splendid Persian tabby plotting against a duck hung up in a larder. And, lastly, the "lazy cat," on whom Agathias has made a funny epigram, was clearly enough of the same breed as our own.

Of *Birds*, next to Jove's eagle and Apollo's raven, comes the *Peacock*, that most fitting signet for a Roman matron as Juno's special fowl; or the *Parrot* trophy of Bacchus's Indian triumph, and in virtue of its lord the only drunkard of the feathered race. "In vino præcipuè lasciva," is Pliny's remark. The large beak and long reflexed tail-feathers, seen in all antique pictures of this bird, prove (what indeed could not have been otherwise) that the only kind known to the ancients was the "*psittacus torquatus*" of India and Ceylon; Corinna's

"*Psittacus Eois imitatrix ales ab Indis,*"

to whose memory Ovid devotes a pretty epigram: *now* our green parakeet with a red or black collar, the most graceful of the family.



As the sagacious bird had travelled into Europe in the train of Dionysos, there was the best of reasons for its introduction amongst the other attributes of the God of Wine.\*

Amongst *Fishes*, the *Dolphin*, as the friend of the shipwrecked, plays the principal part. Its supposed love of music is implied by the Cupid who, mounted upon its back, guides it by the sound of his lyre or flute. Twisted about a rudder (which was S. Pompey's device), it marks the signet of some ancient mariner; emblazoned on a hero's shield, it declares him to be Ulysses, *δελφινόσημος*, as Tzetzes consequently styles him, who had assumed this bearing out of gratitude for the rescue of his infant Telemachus; and generally no cognizance could have better fitted a seaman than the figure commonly painted on ships' prows, to secure favourable weather through its talismanic power. Other fish are figured on gems for apparently no deeper reason than the owner's epicurean preference for their flavour. The *Crayfish*, however, a very frequent type, had much better pretensions to the honour, being held by the Greeks the most speaking emblem of prudence, and who therefore followed the example of the hero Amyclas, who, as Plutarch records, took it for his cognizance on that very account.

Of *Insects*, the *Locust* often occupies a gem, doubtless for the same reason as the *Fly*, the *Spider*, and the *Scorpion*, homœopathic amulets protecting the wearer from the assaults of their living prototypes. In support of this explanation Tzetzes may be adduced, who preserves a tradition that Apollonius Tyaneus kept Constantinople clear of storks by setting up the talismanic image of that bird, and also Antioch of gnats, by a similar precaution.† Gaffarel (*"Curiosités Inouyes,"*)

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\* For the same reason it figured conspicuously in the celebrated Bacchic show of Ptolemy Philadelphus, so minutely described by Callixenus (*"Athen." v.*). Hence is apparent the appropriateness of the components of a pretty gryllus (Leake Collection), masks of Bacchus and Silenus, made up into the figure of a parrot standing upon a branch of citron.

† By writing up the name of the king of the cockroaches, "*Kabikaj*," the Persians protect places against that disgusting insect. Our University Library possesses a Persian MS. so defended by the venerated name thrice inscribed upon the cover.

thinks, with some plausibility, that the "Dii Averrunci," whose office was the scaring away of things noxious, were figured in the shape of the actual object against whom their power was invoked. The Hebrew term for an amulet is "Maguen," *shield*, very expressive of its purpose. In fact, the fly sometimes has its body carved into a human face, which is supposed, with some reason, to typify the much-dreaded Syrian Baal-zebub, "the lord of flies," whose protection was by such homage secured against his own armies. The Arabs in the Middle Ages, and doubtless still, believed that the figure of any destructive animal (as the lion, or the scorpion), engraved at what time the moon was entering into, or even regarding with benign aspect the zodiacal Sign of the same name, most surely defended the wearer against the fury of such beast or reptile.\*

But a widely different motive led the ancient poet to engrave in his ring the *ἀσπίς*, *grillo*, and the *τέττιξ*, *cicala*, insects much resembling in their outlines the cricket and drone-bee of our northern climes—creatures, in virtue of their continuous song, given for attributes to the God of Music, and often depicted in company with his lyre. Frequent also is the *Ant*, which by her example first taught man to store up his harvests in granaries, anciently subterraneous chambers like her own (still used in Algeria under the name of *silos*), rock-hewn cisterns with a small opening above, and which preserved

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The same belief would account for the *mouse* cut out of brown calcedony the size of life (formerly belonging to M. Brücke) which was inscribed on its base ΣΜΙΝΘΕΩΣ, "of Smintheus," i. e., dedicated to him. Now this was an epithet of Apollo, given to him by the people of Troas for having delivered them from a plague of mice, called in Phrygian, *σμίοντα*.

\* Haly, quoted by Gaffarel, who adds: "He has not laid down this doctrine without having proved its reality, for he declares that being in Egypt, he got possession of one of these images of a scorpion, which cured all such as were stung by that creature: it was engraved upon a bezoar stone." But perhaps a sounder explanation for the frequent appearance of the fly on gems is to be found in the superstition noticed by Pliny (xxviii. 5), that the great Mucianus used always to carry a live one, tied up in linen, as a protection against ophthalmia. It may well be that its figure, worn in a ring, was equally efficacious, and less troublesome at the same time. De Boot mentions the then prevailing belief that a green jasper engraved with Scorpio, when the Sun was in that Sign, was a defence against the stone, which serves to explain the frequency of such intagli.



the grain sound for any length of time. The little insect was therefore by their gratitude consecrated to Ceres, and for the same reason the Ant often accompanies the Bull, the Mithraic emblem of the Earth. Again, as the pattern of forethought, the insect, "*haud ignara futuri*," by her visible presence upon the seal, read a useful lesson to all who looked upon it.

The *Frog*, when placed on coins, as Winckelmann thinks, only denotes that the city issuing them was situate on a lake, and when taken for a signet (as by the Argive kings) may show that the same belonged to the native of some such place. Cypselus, says Plutarch ('*Convivium vii. Sap.*'), had frogs sculptured on the façade of his palace, out of gratitude to Neptune, who had commanded their noisy swarms to drown by their croakings the cries of the infant prince, when exposed in his far-famed Coffer upon the margin of a lake, so baffling the search of the murderers sent after him by those who had exterminated his family. But the frogs and serpents placed at the foot of the bronze palm-tree of the Corinthians, amongst the most ancient monuments at Delphi, were interpreted there as only emblems of the spring, at whose advent these reptiles emerge from their winter interment, and renew their youth by casting their slough (Plat. '*De Ei Delphico*,' x.). On the same account the frog has found a place in Christian symbolism as the most expressive image of the resurrection of the body. The family signet of the Etruscan noble Mæcenas bore this figure, probably on the grounds suggested by Winckelmann, Volterra, where his ancestors reigned, rising in the midst of the interminable Maremma. Or lastly, remembering the reason why Theocritus wishes "Long life to the frog, because he has always plenty to drink," this may be the sole reason for many an inveterate toper placing its figure in his signet. Visconti, however, with true Italian subtlety, discovers in the employment of these little reptiles and insects such pretty *concetti* as the following:—Frog carrying a palm branch, and confronting a water-snake, teaches that the weak *may* overcome the strong: Crab seizing a shrimp, proclaims the "law of might": Frog, crab, and mytilus-shell, the alliance of the feeble, for mutual pro-

tection: and again, Cock carrying a palm and fronting a ram's head, signifies that vigilance joined with piety ensure success: the same bird between two cornucopie, that watchfulness is indispensable to the agriculturist: Squirrel springing out of a small shell, and searing a crab by his unexpected apparition, hints that resistance is possible when the least looked for, &c. ('Cat. of the Royal Poniatowsky Cabinet'). But even *his* wit would have to seek for a plausible interpretation of the eagle and the tiger together about to seize a rabbit which turns towards them with fore-paws clasped in supplicatory attitude; or again, the mouse in a car, drawn by a pair of ants, two pretty examples belonging to the Leake collection.

The *Lizard* also makes its appearance upon many Roman signets for a reason pithily expressed in the legend accompanying its figure on a gem of Stosch's, *LVMINA RESTITVTA*. The little reptile, doubtless in virtue of its brilliant green, as refreshing to the wearied sight as the tint of the emerald-gem or emerald-beetle, the ancient *cœlator's* great resource, was deemed a panacea for the eyes, and was employed by oculists either bodily or spiritually in a variety of ways. Of these, the most curious given by Pliny (xxix. 38) was to put out the eyes of one, then confine it in a glass vessel partly filled with earth containing rings made out of solid gold or iron, and when the creature had recovered its sight, as might be observed through the glass, to set it at liberty and wear the rings thus impregnated with its restorative essence, for specifics against ophthalmia.

As the *Spider* likewise, plays a conspicuous part in the same chapter of nostrums for sore eyes, the occurrence of its ugly form upon gems of price (it disfigures a splendid almandine amongst the Marlborough) may be accounted for by the same popular superstition. The remarkable quickness of sight noticeable in this Argus of the insect-tribe must needs have recommended it to empirics prescribing in accordance with the doctrine of signatures. Otherwise, if we prefer the authority of Haly above quoted for the scorpion, we may discover in this sigil an antidote to "spider-bites," a common accident in Italy, to judge from the numerous remedies Pliny prescribes for the same.



In another part of this treatise we shall see what types, and in what sense understood, Clemens Alexandrinus recommends to the Christians of his times, viz., the *Dove*, *Fisherman*, *Lyre*, *Anchor*, and *Ship under sail*. Of all these numerous examples remain, done for the most part in the careless style that betokens the lower times of the Empire. The, to a certain extent cognate series, the Gnostic talismans, has been treated of by me in a separate volume, as its extensiveness and importance absolutely demanded. It only remains to say of them, that, taken in the widest sense of the term, they constitute a large proportion of the intagli that come under our notice, especially from Egypt, and more sparingly from Italy also. Passeri, indeed, estimates their amount at one-third of all the gems in existence; and he is perhaps correct upon his own principle of including under this denomination not only the Abraxas, but all the other sigils referable to the later Egyptian doctrines, added to the Mithraic and astrological. For the Romans, those true John Bulls of the ancient world, troubled themselves very little about what would not be supposed to pay either in this or in a future life, and consequently expunged from the engravers' repertory all the poetical scenes drawn from the Epic Cycle, to which the early Greeks had been so partial; and when they did not make their signets the instruments for gaining favour with the great, by bearing portraits of the imperial house, or of their private patrons, or else of advertising their own professions—they courted the influence of the hidden powers of Nature, putting in their rings nothing but talismans and amulets, inspired by the ideas of every Indian, Egyptian, and Zoroastrian theosophy. Even before the decay of art, the *Fortuna Panthea*, of whom the Romans were so fond, a goddess invested with the attributes of all the other divinities, significantly marks an epoch when the faith of the ancient world, whilst endeavouring to overleap the true limits of art, renounces of necessity all taste and truthfulness of form. Such, at Rome, was the change in religious feeling which excogitated the type of the Panthea, under which the idea of an all-ruling Fortune engrosses and amalgamates into one the forms of all the other deities; whilst in the same revolution going on simultaneously

at Alexandria, originated the mysterious monuments of the equally Pantheistic Iao-worship. Similarly, the far-celebrated "Syrian goddess" of Edessa, of whom Lucian has left so interesting a description, though variously interpreted as Juno, Isis, or Nature personified, displayed in her idol all the attributes of Rhea, Pallas, the Moon, Diana, Nemesis, and the Fates. In the one hand she bore a distaff, in the other a sceptre; upon her head a radiated crown, together with a tower and the cestus, that distinctive sign of Venus Urania. She was enthroned, like Rhea, upon a pair of lions; her companion, Jupiter Belus, similarly upon bulls.

The subject of *Ideal and Real Portraits* has been already discussed at some length in the chapters upon Greek and Roman art. All may be summed up by stating that the former school largely and gloriously puts forth its full strength in thus embodying its ideas of the different deities; whilst it has bequeathed to us magnificent, though rare likenesses of the sovereigns of the time. This latter branch, on the contrary, is where the Roman school is strongest; flourishing to an almost inconceivable extent during the first two centuries of the Empire, and continuing to produce respectable works in *cameo* far down into the Decline. By a singular coincidence this was also the department in which the Italians of the Revival first attained to any great proficiency, the earliest productions of that school quoted with approbation by its historian being Gio. delle Corniuele's head of Savonarola, and Dom. dei Camei's of his contemporary Ludovico Sforza.

As long as the old Greek culture retained its influence over the feelings of the Romans, a period embracing a century and a half of the imperial period, the same taste produced many fine ideal heads; not so much of the *Di Majores*, as of the beings approaching more nearly to humanity—Hercules, the Muses, and the Nymphs. The zeal, both real and affected, with which the Romans cultivated literature, will account for the predominance of the Sisters Nine: *Clio* with her manuscript roll; *Polyhymnia*, wrapped in her mantle and in thought, with finger on her lips, seated or bending forwards; *Melpomene*,



regarding a tragic mask; *Clio* with the pastoral staff; *Terpsichore* tuning her lyre; *Erato*, her cithara—present us with some of the very finest glyptic works in the Roman style. One cannot refrain from noticing here the amusing misconceptions, as regards these types, of those early antiquaries who were bent on discovering some historical monument in every figure on a gem; making out of the pensive attitude of Polyhymnia a Calpurnia meditating upon the dream which had pre-saged Cæsar's fate, as in the case of the fine Orleans gem, and its innumerable copies, all the fruit of the same hallucination; or turning Melpomene with her scroll and mask into a Tomyris brandishing the severed head of Cyrus.\*

And here the curiosity of the subject demands a special note, for amongst the supposed heads of the Muses the *Cumæan Sybil* often lurks unidentified. A denarius of the *gens Manlia* has, however, enabled me to recognise this very interesting portrait. This coin bears for obverse a head of grave and pensive character; the hair, bound with a diadem, falls in numerous straight curls over the forehead, and in three long tresses down the neck. All dispute as to the personage intended is removed by the legend in the exergue, *SIBVLLA*. Nothing, it may here be observed, serves so well to elucidate the designs upon gems of Roman date (necessarily the most numerous class that come before the amateur) as does the study of the consular coinage, for it is evident that during its later period, extending over the last

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\* This fancied identification of portraits may excuse the introduction here of the interesting anecdote related by Las Cases from Napoleon's own mouth, ('Journal,' I. 212). "As they were passing by the ruins of Pelusium, and were almost suffocated with the heat, some one resigned to him the fragment of a doorway, beneath which he contrived to shelter his head for a few minutes: 'and that,' said Napoleon, 'was no trifling concession.' It was on this very spot, on removing some stones at his feet, that chance rendered him possessor of the superb antique well known in the learned world, a cameo of Augustus, a mere sketch, but admirably designed. Napoleon gave it to General Andreossi, who was a great collector of antiquities; but M. Denon, who was at that time absent, having heard of this cameo, was struck with its resemblance to Napoleon, and then had the stone returned to him, and kept it. It afterwards fell into the possession of Josephine, and M. Denon does not know what has since become of it. This information was furnished to me by M. Denon, since my return to France."

century of the Republic, when a free variation in the old established types was admitted by the advancing taste of the quæstors and triumviri monetales, these annual officers put their own family devices upon the coins stamped with their names. So close is the resemblance observable between many gems and the types seen on these medals, not only in their drawing but the actual method of execution, as to demonstrate that both proceeded from the same artist's hand. Another type usually adopted under the same circumstances was the head of some illustrious ancestor, belonging, as a rule, to the previous generation (in order to disarm envy), so that such portraits have all the value of authenticity: and these, as numerous instances cited by me elsewhere decisively prove, constituted the regular signets of their direct descendants. Julius Cæsar was the first Roman who dared to put his own image on his coins, and the younger Pompey followed his example, which became the rule under the Second Triumvirate, and continued to all succeeding time. But long before this, people who had none but themselves to be proud of, indulged their vanity by sealing with their own likenesses, a practice to which Plautus alludes in his *Pseudolus*, making such to have been the impression of his soldier of fortune's signet. Later, it seems to have been esteemed a mark of loyalty thus to adopt for patron the head of the reigning emperor, a usage accounting for the endless quantities of works of the kind; some, the finest, others, the poorest conceivable in execution, though all belonging to the same years, thus declaring themselves cheaply manufactured, and by wholesale, for the use of the soldiery and slaves. Such careless intagli are often met with in rings of silver and bronze, which equally attest the low *status* of their wearers. It is a necessary caution to the gem-collector, and one that finds its proper place here, that by far the majority of imperial heads of large size and good workmanship, so abundant in every cabinet, are not antique works, but date from the Cinque-cento and the last century. Imitations in this line preponderating so immensely over originals, all *fine* intagli of the emperors and their families, require to be examined with the utmost circumspection; and more particularly so, when their



magnitude at all exceeds that of an ordinary signet-stone. The heads of Julia Tili, Domitia, Matidia, M. Aurelius, and L. Verns, have been those most assiduously multiplied by the artists of Pichler's school, on account of the scope afforded to their skill by the elaborate *chevelure* of the originals, and the fine models at hand in the celebrated busts of the last-named emperors. On the other part, the Cinque-cento engravers copied the heads on medals to an extent perfectly inconceivable by any but the practised collector, their staple manufacture being the small camei of the class. To this period are also to be referred all portraits bearing mottoes and explanatory titles, Roman History having been the chosen field for the imitators of that century, as Grecian Fable was to those of the last.

The latter, indeed, can claim for their own by full right the long array of supposed "artists' signatures," as being the work of their own hands interpolated upon ancient gems; nay, more, the greatest part by far of the works themselves recommended by this specious certificate of antiquity.

After having thus passed in review the *subjects* of the glyptic art, a passing notice is due to the *materials* it has employed; and the inspection of every judiciously chosen cabinet will show that fully half its components are sards of various shades. The banded-agate, red jasper, and nicolo come next, in pretty equal proportions. Less frequent are garnets of various shades, including jacinth. The plasma (translucent green calcedony) at the decline of art vies in number with the sard itself. But the man of taste and education will be guided in the acquisition of his gems by the excellence of their work alone, and not by the preposterous desire of heaping together the greatest possible variety of subjects and materials. In the Hertz collection, to which reference has been so often made in the foregoing chapters, the sole object of its founder was, in unreasoning emulation of Stosch's celebrated cabinet, to accumulate every type ever engraved, whence it was swollen to its enormous extent by the frequent admission of spurious works (through his want of all critical knowledge), and of swarms of *soi-disant* antique pastes, until the really fine gems that

unusually favouring circumstances had dropped into it were of a truth, Virgil's—

“Rari nantes in gurgite vasto.”

Of course the species of the stones it exhibited were all the more varied, the vitiated taste of the Decline and the Revival equally having subjected many of the true<sup>3</sup> precious stones to the engraver's art. But in truth, such a motley assemblage of works of every degree of merit (though perhaps desirable in a *national* museum, as illustrating in a continuous series the history of the art, provided only they be duly classified), is quite out of character with a *private* cabinet, where the aim of the possessor should be to admit only a limited number of works, and those the best of their kind. Each gem then carries, as it were, a whole collection in itself; for truly considerable is the amount of time that every finished gem-work demands for its examination before all its numerous excellences can be thoroughly discovered and justly appreciated.







## CAMEO ENGRAVINGS.

THERE is no word in any European language of which so many etymologies have been proposed as this (the surest proof that none of them are satisfactory); and it will be seen that I, too, as in such a case is allowable, have a new derivation to add to the list. But to prelude with a few specimens of the ingenuity of others (for the dispute has amused the leisure of the learned ever since the revival of letters). Conrad Gesner (1565) is of opinion that the steatite, or soap-stone, the favourite material for Gothic small works in relief, owed to its softness its German name of *Speckstein*, and its equivalent, *Gammenhu* (bacon-stone). But Agricola, in the century before, defines it as "a stone called after bacon (*speck-stein*) by the Germans, on account of its white fatty colour (by some termed *Gammahuia*), in which a white layer divides either a black or an ash-coloured material. That in which the white portion is the deepest, and the *sard*, are in our times most employed for engravings in relief. In truth, Nature hath adorned the entire substance of this stone with a certain alternation of black and white." Now as this learned Dutchman died in 1485, his remarks, which are only applicable to the antique onyx and

sardonyx, furnish an incidental illustration of the rapid progress the newly-revived art of cameo-cutting had already made. Agricola had visited Italy and lectured at Ferrara, in 1476, under the patronage of Ercole d'Este. Chabouillet quotes *Menage* to the effect that none of the etymologies then current satisfied him; adding, that he is no better pleased with the attempts made since *Menage's* day, and offers a new one of his own from *κειμήλιον*, which of a truth does not greatly mend matters.

To add a few more: De Boot finds the root in Pliny's *Cyamea*;\* Lessing, after displaying an abundance of useless learning in his long essay upon the word, can offer nothing better than the probable corruption of *gemma onychina*, assuming that *gamahuia* is the primary form of the name; and lastly, the ingenious Von Hammer makes sure he has put his hand upon it in the Arabic word of somewhat similar sound, *camaut*, signifying the *hump of a camel*, and also a *flower*.

After all this, it is high time to produce my own pet solution of the difficulty, though strictly speaking I can lay claim to only half the merit of the discovery. The true source was suggested by an old derivation from the Arabic or Hebrew word, written indifferently *camaa* and *camea*, "an amulet." Now the special material for talismans amongst the Saracens and Persians, from the times of Nebuchadnezzar down to the Caliphs of Bagdad, as Babylonian cylinders, Gnostic abraxas-stones, and Cufic signets abundantly evince, was the loadstone, *pierre d'aimant*, or fibrous hematite. This mineral is described in the thirteenth century by Mohammed Ben Mansur, under the name of *Kamahen*,† or the "ass-stone," called thus most appropriately from its iron-grey colour. Now we find that early mineralogist, Camillo di Leonardo, describing a stone named *Kaman* and *Kakaman*, as derived from *καύμα*, "because found in hot and sulphurous places;" it was "white striped with various colours, and often mixed with the onyx." In this name the Arabic original may plainly be recognised.

\* 'Tis a wonder he overlooked Pliny's *cadmitis*, another name for the *ostracitis*, for of the latter he says "it resembles the onyx."

† He particularly notices its extreme liability to splinter.



But in another place he uses *gemmæ chamainæ*,\* to express gems engraved in relief, or as synonymous with the modern *camei*.

It must be remembered that from the very first *cameo* is never, properly speaking, used to signify the material, but the style of work upon it, and that always in relief. No doubt in Gothic times such an antique engraving, from its greater rarity, was deemed a much more virtuous talisman† than one in intaglio, which the faint glimmering of common sense yet surviving might suggest was originally nothing more than a seal. For De Boot (*circa*. 1600), observes that "the *onyx*, when engraved with figures in relief, goes by the name of *camehuia*, or *cameo*, just as if they were different kinds of stones," which shows clearly the fact that the name applied to the work, not to the gem itself.‡

There can be no question that the Crusaders brought back the appellation, together with a large stock of these treasures of antiquity from the East, when so many other Arabic terms became naturalized (with the arts to which they belong) in the Italian language. Matthew Paris actually gives the word in its modern form ('Vit. Leofric'), "*lapides nobiles insculptos quos cameos vulgariter appellamus*," but the Patent Rolls of Henry III., in the list of the eighty or ninety *camei* he had got together (amongst precious stones of all sorts) to adorn the St. Edward's shrine in Westminster, give a spelling approximating more closely to Von Hammer's Arabic original, viz., *camahutum*, or more usually contracted into *chamah*. In the next century we find the spelling slightly modified into *camaut*, in the Inventory of the jewels of the Sainte Chapelle, drawn up in 1341. "*Item unum pulcherrimum camaut in cujus circuitu sunt plures reliquiæ*," meaning the memorable Apotheosis of Augustus, then known as "*Le grand camahieu de*

\* It is surprising that, amongst the innumerable attempts at finding its origin, no one should have suggested *chama*, the shell so often used, especially by the Cinquecento workers, as a substitute for the *onyx*, especially when there was the analogy of *porcelain* in its favour, derived from *porcellana*, a shell that entered largely into the paste of the Faenza ware.

† From this, *Gamahé* came in French to mean an agate with natural figures upon it. Gaffarel uses the word in this, as its then popular, sense.

‡ In the last century the French usually wrote it *camaiou*, and applied the designation to monochromes producing the same effect, calling such "*peintures en camaiou*."

France." This last form of the word is to be found in a French document written as early as 1380; for in the "Inventoire original des joyaux du Roi Charles V.," an ancient representation of Silenus, busied as usual, is thus described according to the pious acceptance of the age:—"Item, ung *camahieu* sur champ blanc qui pend à double chaisnette, et y a un hermite qui boit à une coupe sous un arbre." There is again a slight difference in its spelling in the inscription added by the Chapter of the Sainte Chapelle to the *socle* which (before the robbery in 1804) supported the Byzantine gold frame inclosing the noted cameo above mentioned. "Ce *camaiieu* bailla à la Sainte Chapelle du palais, Charles Cinquième de ce nom roy de France, qui fut fils du roy Jean l'an mccccxxix."

So much for the name; let us now proceed to the consideration of the thing itself. The term only applies to minute bas-reliefs, cut upon a *hard* stone or gem; for the largest bas-relief upon a sardonyx is still a *cameo*, whilst the smallest upon marble or alabaster continues a *bas-relief*. The small heads and even busts, cut entirely out of gems, and in full relief, are not strictly speaking *camei*, but rather portions of statuettes, the remainder of the figure having been originally completed in the precious metals.

No works exist in the early Greek style that can properly be called *camei*, to use the word in its strict and original sense of a *relievo* in one colour, upon a ground of another. Indeed, works in relief of any kind that can fairly be attributed to either early Greeks or Etruscans, are rare in the extreme. We have, however, a few masks and full-length figures, in the archaic manner *relieved* upon the *backs* of sard scarabei, but they are additions of uncertain date.\* But all these are merely cut out of the sard, without any contrast of colour. From the sard, to use more valuable stones for the *relievo* was the next step,

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\* The earliest gem-relievo known, not so placed on a scarabeus, is the full-faced winged Gorgoneion, in a fine but archaic style, upon a flat sard (Praun, now British Museum). In the same style is the full-length Ganymede upon a field covered with the feathers of his eagle; to be reckoned amongst the first attempts of Greek art in cameo-engraving; a very remarkable monument (Orleans).



for which a precedent had been given by the Etruscans, in their conversion of emeralds and carbuncles into scarabei. Of such reliefs the most important, and perhaps earliest examples known, are those set in the rings discovered upon the hand of a female in a tomb near Kertch, opened by Alexander Tcherkow, in 1839. They were eight in number: of these, two were of extraordinary size, evidently votive jewels, set with heads of Pallas, one in three-quarters, the other in front face, wearing a helmet crested with a bird with drooping wings (not the customary owl), and cut in high relief upon a gem resembling "un grénat le plus foncé,"—probably the dark orange jacinth. These gems were ovals of no less than  $2 \times 1\frac{1}{4}$  inches in size, and equally large was also a superb Siriam garnet similarly mounted, but engraved with an intaglio. The other rings were of the ordinary size.

The invention of the true *cameo* belongs, as the works themselves testify, to the times of Alexander's immediate successors, when, as K. O. Müller remarks, "The display of luxury in the article of engraved gems was stimulated in the highest degree by the fashion that had originated in the East, but was patronized by the court of the Seleucidae, above all others, of enriching with gems, cups, craters, candelabra, and other works in the precious metals. For these and similar purposes, where the engraving on the precious stone was intended merely for ornament, and not to be impressed as a seal, the stones were cut in relief as camei, for which the onyx of variously-coloured layers was in preference selected. To this class belong, what first make their appearance at this epoch, cups and pateræ carved entirely out of precious stones.\* In this branch, and during the first portion of this

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\* "Non paucæ etiam pocula ex auro quæ ut mos est regibus, et maxime in Syria gemmis erant distincta clarissimis. Erat etiam vas vinarium ex una gemma prægrandi, trulla excavata, manubrio aureo . . ." Cicero, describing the return-dinner given by Antiochus Dionysos to Verres. The latter, after charming the innocent Syrian with his taste and admiration for these beautiful things, *borrowed* the gold plate, under pretence of showing it to his silversmiths for a pattern, and the murrhine cup, to examine it more minutely. The same prince had with him "candelabrum e gemmis clarissimis opere mirabili perfectum . . . eo splendore qui ex clarissimis et pulcherrimis gemmis esse debebat, ea varietate operum ut ars videretur certare cum copia, ea magnitudine ut intelligi posset non ad hominum apparatus, sed ad amplissimi

period, whilst art was still inspired by a higher spirit, true prodigies of beauty and of mechanical perfection were produced." The Ptolemies, however, have a better claim, founded on existing monuments, than the Seleucidae to the honour of the first patronage of the new art, probably through the greater facility they enjoyed, as masters of the trade with India, of obtaining the proper material, for the earliest cameo presenting portraits that can be certainly recognised is the Vienna of Philadelphus and Arsinoë. But the equally celebrated Gonzaga (now Russian) cameo, usually assigned to the same personages, is much more probably a Nero and Agrippina, as is conclusively proved by the nascent beard of the prince (never worn by a *Ptolemy*), and from the ornamentation of the ægis exactly agreeing with that seen in the portraits of Augustus. The Vienna cameo above quoted, is finished with inconceivable nicety of detail. The king's head is covered with a helmet of the *Attic* shape, but with broad cheek-pieces, and embossed with the Eleusinian dragon: his queen wears the diadem. The relief is kept very flat, and the field is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter. At Berlin is another portrait of the same Ptolemy, with the bust very elegantly draped. The Blacas (Strozzi) cabinet boasts of a work equally perfect in execution with the Vienna, though on a smaller scale, erroneously assigned to the same Egyptian originals for its two conjugated busts, diademed, though they present beyond all question the Apollo-like profiles that mark the family of the Phœbus-sprung Seleucus. Another splendid example, of well-ascertained date, is that with the heads of Demetrius Soter, King of Syria, and Laodice, and which therefore must have been executed about B.C. 155. This is a sardonyx of three layers,  $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1$  inch in size, the work of the highest order, like that on the coins of the same king. It was incrustated in a cabinet made for Cardinal Grimani, in the sixteenth century, which stood in the *sala* of the Council of Ten, Venice, whence

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templi ornamentum esse factum" ('Verrin,' iv. 28). It was made to be dedicated in the Capitol, but the "terrible amateur" managed to get it conveyed into his own house for inspection "on private view," and then expelled Antiochus from Sicily on a charge of piracy!



it was extracted in 1797, and ultimately came into the possession of the Empress Josephine: its present locality is not known. At Paris is a good bust of Perseus, last of the Macedonian kings, wearing a strange kind of petasus, obtusely conical, like a Scotch bonnet.

The earliest historical notice I have been able to discover of this style of working in gems, as quoted under a technical name, occurs in Seneca ('De Ben.' iii. 26) who (in a curious anecdote he there tells concerning the notorious *delator* Maro and his intended victim Paulus) speaks of the latter as having upon his finger a head of Tiberius in relief upon a projecting gem: "*Tiberii Cæsaris imaginem ectypam atque eminente gemma.*" Such a periphrasis would lead us to conclude that works in this manner were still novelties at Rome; else the writer would have thought the technical word *ectypa* sufficient alone to express his meaning. Such, indeed, a little later in the same century we find to be the case with Pliny, who in his notice of the stone *Mormorio*, and its three species so employed, has "*ad ectypas sculpturas aptantur.*" This gem appears from his definition to have been our dark jacinth, and masks, or Faun and Satyr-heads being the subjects for which this material is universally found employed in antique examples, it may plausibly be conjectured that *Mormo*, the generic title for such objects, gave the name to the stone: Gorgo and Mormo being epithets of Hecate, the night-hag, in the spell quoted by Hippolytus. The Gorgon's head was, of all amulets, the most ancient and the most potent; hence the propriety of giving her name to the stone esteemed the special vehicle for such fantasies.

The experience of many years, and the examination of innumerable examples, have convinced me that truly antique camei are, with but comparatively few exceptions, of dimensions exceeding those suitable for a ring-stone, and were intended, at the time of making, as decorations for the dress and the armour,\* or specially, the vessels in gold that ornamented the treasures of the temples or the sideboards of the great.

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\* Thus Plutarch, in describing how Alexander was armed for the battle of Arbela, mentions that he wore a helmet with gorget of polished steel *set with gems*, but a cuirass of quilted linen.

For if we inspect those early cabinets of antiquities formed before the great Italian revival of the art of cameo-cutting in the middle of the sixteenth century, such as the Medicean, as far as regards the pieces collected by Lorenzo, and marked with his well-known stamp, LAVR-MED, the camei will be found of large size, and their work bold, but somewhat wanting in finish. The same remark applies to the goldsmiths' work of the Middle Ages, in those important examples yet extant, where amidst the profusion of antique gems enchased in them, camei of any kind occur in very small relative numbers. And in these so sparse examples, the same boldness and want of minute elaboration are equally conspicuous; as the camei manifest that occur in such mines of antique wealth as the Cologne Shrine, or the Trésor de Conques, in whose enrichments the uncritical piety of the Gothic craftsman has embalmed for the modern connoisseur so many precious relics of imperial art.

The great rarity of small antique camei is apparent from the fact that they hardly ever turn up, however coarse and valueless, in the miscellaneous jumble of antique stones collected by the peasants about Rome in digging over their vineyards and gardens which occupy the anciently most populous sites of the old city—a remark to which there are fewer exceptions even than in the case of *pastes* elsewhere commented upon.\* Again, not even the largest cabinets can show an antique ring set with a *fine* cameo, although had the camei originally destined to this purpose been as common in ancient times as the modern possessors of so many supposed antiques fondly suppose, rings of Roman date would exhibit as many examples of camei set in them as they actually do of intagli. But so far is this from being the case, that it is only amongst the large number of antique rings preserved in the

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\* The *true* relative proportion (numerical) of antique camei to intagli finds a curious test presented in the Carlovingian goldsmiths' works preserved in the Abbaye de Conques, Auvergne, the statuette of Ste. Foy, the A of Charlemagne, &c. Amongst numerous precious stones adorning them are some sixty intagli to *three* camei (small heads of little merit). And yet from the importance of the works in gold it is certain that these gems were the very choicest the fervent devotion of the age could scrape up out of the débris of the entire Roman empire.



collection of the Galleria, Florence, that a solitary instance has rewarded my researches; and that one, in some other respects, so interesting as to merit more particular notice here. It evidently was once the ornament of some Roman patron of the turf, who held (as the poet laureate hath it) his wife "a little higher than his horse," for the centre presents a lady's bust in relief on *garnet*, and on the shoulders of the ring intagli in the same gem of the heads of his favourite racers, with their names at the side, AMOR and OSPIS. The shank is filled up with the legend POMPII NICA, neatly cut in the gold.\* Besides this, I have only met with three other examples, all trifling pieces of the latest times, two representing birds, and perhaps assignable to the Christian class, the third a Cupid, rudely enough done, but in a setting of a novel pattern (Devonshire).†

This paucity of camei intended for ring stones will appear less extraordinary if we reflect that the ancients wore rings not for mere ornament but for use, as signets; and hence even the most valuable of the precious stones generally received with them some enhancement from art in the way of engraving. Add to this, the *sculptors* of antiquity do not appear to have succeeded in producing works on a *small scale* in this line sufficiently well finished to have ever become a fashionable or a favourite decoration of the finger. But this point will be discussed at length when I come to speak of the distinctive execution of antique camei as compared with those produced since the revival of the glyptic art.

This part of our subject will be best approached by considering the primary employment of camei in ancient ornamentation.

\* "Success to thee, Pompeius!" an address which, besides the blundered spelling of *hospes*, indicates the date of the Lower Empire. The character  $\pi$  often replaces  $\kappa$  in Latin inscriptions of every age.

† That camei came into the head-dress of Roman ladies may be inferred from Propertius (ii. 22. 9)—

"Sive vagi crines puris in frontibus errant  
Indica quos medio vertice gemma tenet ;"

*Indica gemma* being the usual synonym for a sardonix. The stone probably formed the centre of the *vitta*.

The jewelled vases and ornaments which the Macedonian conquest of the East introduced into Europe, were set with precious stones, prized only for their intrinsic value.\* Such was the inestimably precious golden vine under whose shadow sat the Great King to administer justice, the grapes whereof were clusters of Indian gems:—"Emeralds, carbuncles, and all kinds of stones exceeding in costliness," says Phylarchus, an eye-witness quoted by Athenæus (x. 35). The treasury of Mithridates, captured by Pompey at Talaurea, contained, besides two thousand onyx vases, "many bowls and coolers and *rhyta* and couches and chairs of state and horse-trappings, also jewels for the breast and neck, all set with gems and overlaid with gold" (Appian. Bell. Mithrid. 117). These spoils came in part from the inheritance of Darius Hystaspis, his ancestor, partly had belonged to the Ptolemies, having been put in the safe keeping of the state of Cos by Queen Cleopatra I., and there seized upon by Mithridates; much, however, he had himself amassed. Though none of these vases are now to be traced, we doubtless have imitations of them in those vessels of the Lower Empire set with pastes (like the Cup of Chosroes) and we discover the exact meaning of the term *δαδίθα*, as applied to jewellery, in the not unfrequent examples of necklaces formed of gold chains set at *intervals* with precious stones almost in their native forms.

Yet the idea of imitating the chasings and *repoussé* reliefs (*œclaturæ emblemata*), then so fashionable for decorating the surfaces of gold and silver plate, must speedily have suggested itself to the art-craving Grecian eye; the more especially when favoured by the well-defined strata in the material, the sardonyx, now so plentifully placed at the command of the Syrian and Egyptian sovereigns. The *painting* in strongly contrasted colours, the universal decoration of the earthen vessels serving for the purposes of luxury in the ages preceding Alexander's, may also have led them to this application of the sardonyx. No distinct notice of *camei* thus employed can be met with in the

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\* In the list of the donaria at the Temple of Branchidae occurs "a barbaric, gem-inlaid, gold vase," the gift of Seleucus.



Greek classics; nevertheless, such seems implied in the words of Athenæus (iv. 147), where, speaking of the feast given by Cleopatra to Antony, he has: "All the vessels were of gold, and set with gems, displaying extraordinary *art* in their execution;" terms hardly to be referred to the goldsmith's work alone. Pliny's remark that the triumph over Mithridates first turned the mania of the Roman dilet-tanti after murrhine vases, and after *gems*, directly bears upon this very quotation. The silver plate, decorated with the works of the old *torcutores*, so highly prized up to this event, and the making of which had employed even some amongst the most eminent Greek statuaries, (like Phidias himself), had entirely ceased to be made in the first years of the Empire. The flat reliefs, in fashion in Pliny's day, were cut out of the surface of the silver with the chisel, whence their generic name *anaglypta*, no longer chased up with the punch, *sphyrrelata*, and such is precisely the style of execution that distinguishes the true antique cameo.

*Anaglypta* in silver and gold, camei in gems, being primarily designed to enrich pieces of plate whose destination was to decorate the tables of the luxurious, the subjects chosen for either class were naturally to be expected such as we find them in reality upon these remains; Bacchus, his attendants, and his symbols, Cupids festively employed, forming by far the largest proportion of their number. *Portraits*, when such occur of truly antique execution, are shown by their large size to have ornamented vases or *cistæ*, dedicated in temples, or at a later date to have formed the ornament of the huge circular brooches used to fasten\* the *paludamentum* upon the shoulder, an instance of which curiously illustrating this fact will be found in my notice of that magnificent cameo, the Family of Severus. The vast slabs nearly a foot square, like the "Grand Cameo of France," could

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\* Spartian, "sine gemmis fibula stringeret," to exemplify Hadrian's hatred of pomp. In the Spina Pompey the paludamentum is fastened over the shoulder with a large Medusa's head in relief, unmistakably meant for a gem-cameo. Some camei retain a massy iron setting, which shows they had served to decorate armour. Such was the case with the finest example I ever saw for sale in Rome, a head of Jupiter Dodonæus in agate-onyx, about four inches in diameter, valued at 2000 scudi. Such a head, though in front face, appears on the shoulder, the Gorgon's on the breast, of the royal bust in the Odescalchi cameo.

not possibly have served for mere ornaments of the person, but may well have formed the centre part of the immense dishes in gold on which the imperial epicures so greatly prided themselves; replacing by a gem-relief the ancient emblema in metal. For such a relieve in the precious metal, "The Contest between Bacchus and Hercules" forms the centre-piece of the magnificent *discus*, known as the "Patère de Rennes," from the place of its discovery; the chief ornament, in that class of antiquities, of the French Bibliothèque. Such elaborately ornamented pieces of plate were not for use, but for display upon the sideboard, "*ornamenta abaci*," like the noble chased chargers so much esteemed by the wealthy patrons of Foppa, Francia, and Cellini, in the best days of the Renaissance.\*

Yet the squarer form of many rather suggests the notion that they were intended for *panels*, and this circumstance, coupled with the subjects they exhibit connected with the Bacchanalia, the Eleusinian Mysteries, or important historical events, makes it more than probable they formed the sides of the sacred coffers used in such rites, and dedicated by the piety of the emperor, whose deeds these reliefs commemorate. Of such coffers, we have the detailed account of the most famous, that of Cypselus, dedicated by him about B.C. 600 in the temple of Juno, at Elis, and the decoration of its sides gives us a notion of the similar works in later times when gems had replaced the gold† and ivory of

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\* Visconti, describing the well-known Jupiter Dodonæus of Venice (then, 1793, recently brought from Ephesus to the Cav. Zuliani) adds: "The comparison of ancient monuments gives birth to the suspicion that this gem originally adorned one of those superb crowns worn by the priesthood. The Cistophoros of Bellona, and the Areni-Gallus of the Idæan Mother (Mus. Cap. iv. pl. 16), have their crowns enriched with similar circular camei, figured with the busts of their tutelary divinities; camei which, in their relative proportions to those statues, exactly correspond with the dimensions of the piece under consideration" (Op. Var. i. 206). Domitian, says Suetonius (Dom. iv.), presided at the Secular Games, "*crapulentus purpureusque, amictus toga Græcæ, capite gestans coronam auream cum effigie Jovis ac Junonis Minervæque*."

† That the Romans, like the Cinque-centist Italians, inserted engraved gems in their *meubles de luxe*, is almost made out from what Statius says of the Tiburtine villa of Vopiscus:—

"Labor est auri memorare figuras,  
Aut ebur, aut digitis dignas contingere gemmas."



primitive opulence. The bas-reliefs, minutely described by Pausanias, which completely covered its front, arranged in five lines, were carved, some in the cedar wood of the chest, some in ivory, but many on gold plates affixed to the surface. Of such ivory panels a few are yet preserved: the perishableness of the substance explains their rarity. Two, a tragic mask, and a nymph loading a boy with a basket of fruit (found at Isca Silurum), distinctly show the holes through which they were pinned to the wood of the coffer. Their subjects, by their agreement with those usually found on the larger camei, prove the similar application of the latter.

That caskets in gold and precious stones were customary *donaria* to the gods under the Empire, is attested by several passages, and notably by the pretty poem of Statius on the occasion of Earinus (the favourite of Domitian) sending his locks, shorn *ex voto*, as an offering to his national god, the Esculapius of Pergamus, in *gemmatu pyxide*, "a gold casket set with gems."\* Again, the incense-box in the hand of the empress, on the coins with the type of *PIETAS AVG*, is evidently of gold enriched with stones inlaid. That the subjects of these gems were analogous to the destination of the box, is only consistent with reason, and is, besides, indicated by the practice of other times when a similar feeling for art once again prevailed. Juvenal actually informs us that camei profusely decorated the musical instruments of the dilettanti of his times, where describing the lady *artiste* he notices—

. . . "densi radiant testudine tota  
Sardonyches."

The Muses, poets, lyres, so frequently their subjects, declare such to have been the destination of many that have come down to us. In the Italian Revival we find the most famous engravers of the day, such as Il Vicentino and Castel Bolognese, devoting their time chiefly to the production of large plaques in crystal (although engraved in

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\* The poet makes a band of Cupids act as tonsors on the occasion, using their arrow-heads for scissors. It is possible he borrowed this far-fetched conceit from the actual decorations of the *pyxis*.

intaglio) to serve for panels in coffers destined to sacred uses. It is also more than probable that the enormous circular or oval camei with imperial busts ornamented the pole of the labarum borne by the imperial body-guard, the *protectores domestici*, for many monuments show that portraits formed a conspicuous object in its ornamentation.

The great intrinsic value of the gold required for the mounting of such glyptic prodigies, has occasioned the total disappearance of these specimens of the art of the Roman "compositor-gemmarum;" hence the rare examples (though of minor importance) that by some lucky accident have escaped the melting pot, merit a particular description here. This, too, may serve to instruct the wealthy amateur how to display to the best advantage, and in the manner contemplated by their actual engravers, any such remarkable pieces as good fortune may throw into his hands, instead of following the too common modern practice, and disfiguring the tasteful work by mounting it in the form of an unwieldy, unwearable finger-ring. The first example is (No. 2550, Paris) a Medusa's head in full face, slightly turned to the left, of Greek work, in white agate, set as the pendant to a necklace, in the style of the times of Severus, in fine gold and with a loop affixed. The stone is framed within a beaded circle, then comes a flat border, and the whole circumference is inclosed within a cable moulding. This frame is at the edge turned over a plate of gold forming a back to the cameo. Two *bouquets*, each composed of six gold grains, are placed above and below the cameo. Again, No. 2558 is a necklace formed of five hexagonal gold columns alternating with six rings, whence hang four aurei of the greatest rarity, in the series of Hadrian, Severus, and his sons, and two camei in agate-onyx of two strata—the one a head of Pallas, the other of Julia Domna—both busts in profile. They are set within a kind of box covering the back of the stone, but having the borders pierced in an open-work pattern, the "opus interrasile" so fashionable in the Decline. This last important jewel was dug up in 1809 at Naix, near Commercy. In the late Mertens collection was an imperial bust (Carus?) in front face, of jacinth, discovered retaining its silver setting upon the breast of a skeleton, the inmate of a



Frankish sepulchre at Marsfeld, near Mayence. The breast of the corpse was covered with three large double-spiral disks in stout bronze wire, probably attached at first to the outside of his wooden shield, (which had disappeared) for ornament and defence, and his arms were encased from wrist to elbow in large spiral bracelets of the same metal, serving the purpose also of gauntlets.

*Distinctive Style and Execution of the Antique Work in Cameo.*

To obtain a clear notion of this important subject we must attentively examine the vestiges of the mechanical means adopted by the ancient cameo-cutters in the execution of their works. On minutely inspecting the surface of an antique cameo, the design will be found *cut out* of the coloured stratum, as it were, by the repeated strokes of a fine chisel, which has left a number of uneven surfaces to be polished down more or less by some subsequent operation. The outline of the figure always seems to fade away into the field, whilst the latter generally retains minute traces of the upper layer not completely cleared away from it; and the relievo is never *undercut*, that being a meretricious innovation of the Cinque-cento school, and afterwards universally adopted on account of its effectiveness in throwing up the design from the field. But on this last point, the ancient artist had not the same reason to be solicitous, the strongly marked shades in the precious material in which he worked (unattainable in later times) supplied him with all the colours of a painter, and the graduated tints necessary to animate his composition. Ancient ingenuity, by availing itself of the various layers of the subject-matter, has often produced pictures most appropriately coloured. It is not uncommon to find an emperor's portrait in which the wreath, the hair, the flesh, and the drapery, shall be rendered each in an appropriate tint upon a background advantageously setting forth the whole relief. Amongst the Blacas camei, a large one, Victory in a car drawn by four horses walking, represents each horse in a proper tint of its own. A Pallas urging on her biga, has a pair of coal-black and milk-white steeds, whilst the

Gorgon of her shield is emblazoned thereon in a colour quite distinct. Many whimsical performances of the kind might be quoted: in the Beverley Cabinet is an Egyptian goose displaying its blue and white plumage, and actually the *red legs* that serve to identify its species. In the Bessborough, No. 155 is the most singular mimicry of Nature in colour as well as in form ever accomplished in this art: a fly in full relief, standing out entirely from the onyx in all its proper hues; even its wings have the very gauzy shimmer of reality. Wonderful advantage has been taken of the very unusual shades of the material to produce a result so unique in its way. It probably was an *ex voto* to Jupiter Muscarius, the Baalzebub of Syria—an amulet to keep off his bloodthirsty hosts.

The *field* of the antique cameo is left uneven, and marked with traces of the layer which has been cleared away, for it has evidently been scraped flat and rubbed down with the point of the Armenian *cos* or emery-stone, which could not be brought to bear with exact precision upon a large surface at once. Hence these works, though extremely effective at a distance (the object for which they were designed), appear on too close an inspection *lumpy*, to use the vulgar term, and unfinished. And this awkwardness is much augmented in most of the large imperial class by the abrupt manner in which the outline of each stratum is cut down by a vertical stroke, in order to bring its colour into the strongest possible contrast with the shade beneath.

This unevenness of the ground has actually been assumed by some *cognoscenti* as the most infallible test of the antiquity of a cameo; but this is carrying the principle too far, the same unevenness of the field marking some of the productions of the early Revival, although entirely obviated in the works of its matured period and in those of modern times.

Many camei in sardonyx show a fine hole drilled through their diameter, which is sometimes explained as intended to admit a thread for sewing them on to the dress; an absurd idea, for these valuable stones were always deemed worthy of a sumptuous mounting in gold. This hole, as Pliny himself remarks, merely proves that the stones



came from India, where the only use known for them, then as now, was in the form of beads; the Roman artist reduced these beads into the shape best suited to his purpose. Such a perforation, indeed, proves the antiquity of the onyx itself, though not necessarily of the work upon it, for that may have been retouched, or even entirely remodelled, by some good hand of modern times; a common practice where a fine material, but carrying an indifferent antique work, tempted the exchange.

Another rule laid down for the distinguishing of the antique *sculptura* in this branch, viz., that it was invariably worked out with the diamond-point, is undoubtedly true in itself; yet it by no means follows that all camei so executed are antique, for precisely the same method was used by the earliest Italian masters. In fact, it is most interesting to trace how these ingenious hands, in their attempts to resuscitate the lost art, sought to find out and exactly follow every footstep of their Roman models by adopting the same technical means, for the camei produced in Lorenzo dei Medici's school are in all respects identical with the ruder productions of Imperial times. Witness the wonderful portraits of our Henry VIII. (of which more shall be said in the proper place), and the extraordinary bust of Elizabeth, early in her reign, in a green and white onyx (now in the South Kensington Museum), which exemplify the Italian style of the commencement of their century. In all these, as in the portrait-camei of the Lower Empire, we find a rim of the upper stratum left as a border to the composition, and sometimes elaborately moulded, a decoration which materially enhances the effect of the whole, besides adding much security against fracture to the reduced field.

But the later, and beyond comparison more numerous class of the Cinque-cento works, present many striking differences in their treatment from the antique. Of these the principal is the extremely high relief of the figures, which gives them a very *bossy* appearance; their peculiar undercutting, which actually detaches some portions of them from the field, which last now presents a perfectly even and lustrous surface; a singular and overdone polish and rotundity have likewise

been imparted to all the relievo, making it look as though modelled in wax and then stuck on to the ground.

This glassy, semi-transparent polish upon the projecting portions of a cameo, constitutes the surest proof of its recent origin (however unpalatable may be this fact to many a credulous amateur), for the same parts in a really antique sardonyx have invariably assumed a dead and chalky appearance from the action of time and the earthy salts upon them during the long course of ages throughout which they have been subjected to these powerful agents. Besides, they never present that close resemblance to an opaque, brilliantly-coloured enamel, which forms so striking a peculiarity of the best antique performances, and testifies so clearly to the astonishing perfection of the material itself.

Another strong proof of antiquity is the agreement of the treatment of the subject, if an imperial portrait, with that on the contemporary medals, for both proceeded from the same hand, the die-sinker of the Imperial mint being also by profession a gem-engraver. Although the unworn polish of the cameo surface argues conclusively against its genuineness, such being entirely incompatible with the necessary exposure of the parts, yet a roughened surface, on the other hand, must not be accepted as an infallible criterion of antiquity, owing to the curious device hit upon by the fabricators of antiques, the cramming a turkey with newly-made gems, and thus, through the action of its gizzard, anticipating in a few days the effects of many centuries upon their polish.\*

Again, the *material* itself affords some evidence of date, the larger number of modern works being executed in the Occidental onyx, or rather *agate-onyx*, easily to be recognised by its two layers, an opaque white resembling ivory (serving for the relief) upon a grey transparent

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\* But of all their contrivances, the most ingenious, as well as the most deceptive, is that in which the relief is cut out clear in the white Ischian lava, so much employed in Neapolitan Jewellery, which is then affixed to a ground of brown agate by means of so easily vitrifiable cement. The ground cracks, and assumes all the aspect of antiquity, from the effect of the fire used in the operation. Thus, while the relief presents the usual opacity of the antique cacholong layer of the sardonyx, the ground stands the test of the file, and completely disarms the suspicion of the amateur.



ground. In this poor, cold material, it may safely be asserted that the ancients never condescended to work; they employed the rich-coloured species alone, brought from India and Arabia. The genuine antique cameo, when it has only two layers, presents the upper one forming the relief in pearly or porcelain white, upon a *black* ground, but which held against the light becomes translucent,\* and of the richest sard. Such is the material of the few camei extant which belong to the pure Greek period. Here, therefore, is a test that enables us at once to decide upon the pretensions of innumerable pieces, however close a resemblance to the antique they may offer in their general appearance.

The *drawing* and the *style* of the subject itself, criteria on which some connoisseurs lay so much stress, form, if taken alone, a very insufficient guide in determining the antiquity of a gem; for although the grotesque, exaggerated design of the Revival, may easily be recognised by a practised eye, yet the more recent engravers, like Pistrucci and Girometti, from the constant study of Greek models, have produced works that would do honour to the greatest names of antiquity. Indeed, I must confess that a "Proserpine," and a "Rape of the Palladium," both camei by the latter artist, surpassed any ancient production in that class that has ever come under my observation;† and the same may be said of some of the imperial heads by Sirletti in the century before. In such cases, therefore, the best grounds for a decision are to be found in the presence, or absence, of the peculiar appearance imparted by time alone to the sardonyx, the opacity and deadness assumed by the originally vitreous strata of the material. The relief, as above observed, is not to be distinguished from enamel fused upon the ground, an effect heightened by the excessive softness and flatness of work stamping so many of the best camei. Yet even

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\* A sure method of distinguishing the true Indian species from the artificially stained German black-and-white onyx, which is perfectly opaque, its pores being choked with the carbonized dye.

† To which I can now add a third in a grander style, a nude hero standing with a Victory perched on his outstretched hand, a general's *baton* in the other, upon an agate onyx, three inches high (Beverley). All these masterpieces have his name in full, carelessly incised in the field.

these are qualities which, as we have seen, certain of the earliest Italians succeeded to some extent in reproducing. Indeed, this softness, flatness, and deep colours, render many antique camei only comparable to Limoge enamels on copper. And this result is referable to the mode of working alone, superseded later by the more expeditious operation of the wheel. But to the last days of the art, the diamond-point continued the favourite instrument of the really great engravers. La Chaux states that *Guay* executed with it alone more than half, and all the finishing part of his *chef d'œuvre*, the bust of Louis XV., upon a large sardonyx, costing him two years of continuous labour. Owing to the thinness of the white layer, the face is in flat relief, and not undercut, and the whole treatment closely agrees with Il Greco's Henri II. on sard (Orleans Gems). To give the last polish to the field, *Guay* used tripoli rubbed in with a pointed quill. In so doing he undoubtedly was reviving, without suspecting it, the very process by which the ancients imparted that wonderful lustre to their intagli.

But the Cinque-cento school was unacquainted with this important auxiliary, the use of which was only revived by Sirletti, about 1720, at the suggestion of that experienced collector Baron Stosch. The Cinque-cento camei have all been done with the *wheel* alone, and received the over polish characteristic of the style at their final stage; both points of extreme value in the discriminating of them from the true antique.







## LOWER EMPIRE AND BYZANTINE.

THE reign of the powerful and wealthy Severus, a man of learning and of taste, has left us many fine camei in portraits of himself and family, but with the failure of his line the art also seems to have suddenly expired. The succeeding century of perpetual revolutions and of misery has bequeathed to us nothing of the kind, or indeed any other monuments of sculpture. But when Constantine re-established peace and prosperity throughout the Roman world, this art also, with all the others serving to the brilliant sumptuousness of the court, received his special patronage, and produced works, all portraits of himself or sons, admirable for the material, and by no means despicable in point of execution. A really surprising number of such memorials remain to attest how the long and pompous reign of the first Christian emperor (*"sæcla gemmea sed Neroniana,"* as his times were aptly designated) certainly produced a great though transient revival in this branch of glyptics. After Commodus, there is no emperor of whom so many important camei exist—that praise applying to the beauty and size of the sardonyx-stones presenting them, far more than to the work upon them, which is flat and stiff, precisely in the style of his medal-

lions. Of these the most important are the Helmeted Head (Bessborough), miscalled Galba's,  $3\frac{1}{2} \times 3$  inches in measurement; Constantine and Fausta (St. Petersburg); Constantine on horseback striking down two enemies,  $2\frac{1}{2} \times 2$  inches (Paris); and lastly, one of the largest camei known, being  $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$  inches, the laureated and ægis-covered bust of his son, Constantius II. (Royal Collection). Several Scriptural subjects in cameo (Paris) are ascribed by Chabouillet, and upon good grounds, to the same period. It appears from an ordinance of Leo's (Cod. xi. 11) that none but the "artifices Palatini," court jewellers, were allowed to execute these imperial gem-portraits, which explains the costliness of the material, and the exceptional perfection of the workmanship.

This is the place to mention a cameo which has long, on Gori's authority, passed for a production of this age, a date which its perfection in point of art vehemently contravened, although its *costume* supported the attribution. This is the Strozzi (now Blacas) "Constantinus II.," an ægis-covered bust on a sardonyx of the greatest beauty,  $5\frac{1}{2} \times 4$  inches in size. But upon examination, the portrait proves an indubitable Augustus, a profile in the finest manner of his age; but the face offering some resemblance to the regular features of the Christian Cæsar, he had unceremoniously made it his own image by substituting for the original laurel crown a Byzantine gold diadem set with precious stone. These latter having been lost in the course of the Middle Ages, minute camei were substituted for them by order of Leone Strozzi. This appropriation of another's likeness is perfectly consistent with the procedure of an age which scrupled not to build the Arch of Constantine out of the materials of that of Trajan, and apply to the Gallic and civil wars of the former the bas-reliefs illustrating the Parthian campaigns of his predecessor. In all likelihood this cameo, thus rechristened, was made to ornament a reliquary presented to a cathedral by the pious son of St. Helena.

Of these later productions, others the most important will be found described amongst the "Historical Camei" in the 'Handbook.' After this period we meet with no more attempts at perpetuating



the features of the sovereign upon a cameo; in fact, the art of taking portraits from the life had suddenly become extinct, for after Valens, the heads on the coinage, even when best executed, are purely conventional, and the boy Honorius presents exactly the same lifeless aspect as the veteran Theodosius. But with the Christian emperors a most interesting series opens; subjects taken from Scripture, and these, with a break of two centuries under the *Macedonian* dynasty, are continued down to the time of the Frankish conquest in 1204. The material is still slabs of sardonyx of the largest dimensions and the richest quality, showing how long the Byzantines maintained a direct overland trade\* with India; but the execution of the designs (with a few exceptions, doubtless referable to the immediate epoch of Constantine) is barbarous and untechnical in the extreme. The figures seem to have been chipped out of the upper strata with some rude implement; probably they were filed out by means of an emery point, precisely as beforesometimes many of the Egyptian scarabei were evidently shaped and engraved. On any other hypothesis it would be difficult to explain their peculiar want of finish.

Of the subjects, the *Annunciation* is a very common one, and this circumstance may afford some clue to their date, for the type of the *Panagia* does not appear upon the Byzantine coinage before John Zimisces at the close of the tenth century. Had these large pieces dated from an earlier time they would have more generally presented busts of the Saviour, or Christian symbols—the Good Shepherd, vines, doves, or the *Agnus Dei*. I have indeed met with a small relieve in plasma, the bust of Christ in front face, IC XC in the field above, much

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\* Visconti justly observes that the largeness and fine quality of many of the sardonyx slabs used in the Byzantine cameo, representing scriptural subjects, is a proof that the decay of the empire had not rendered this precious material more rare or more difficult to procure—a fact this, confirming the opinion that the supply came from India, a region with which a very active trade was kept up during the whole period the empire existed. Similarly, the largest and finest plasma I have ever seen (Eastwood, 1866) was an oblong slab bearing a full-length St. Nicolas in half-relief, the legend written vertically down each side in well-formed capitals, Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΣ. The plasma came from some far Eastern source, now lost.

resembling the same head upon the aurei, which begins to form their type under Justinian Rhinotmetus, A.D. 685, the execution of whose coinage yet retains some traces of the ancient carefulness and finish. On these grounds, the choice of the subjects would lead me to assign the majority of these important pieces to the eleventh century, when the last gleam of prosperity shone upon the declining Empire under the rule of the learned Comneni.

These monuments for the most part bear legends in an ill-cut debased letter, and of which the orthography is precisely the phonetic of an uneducated Greek of modern times, in which all the vowels and diphthongs of similar sound are used indifferently for one another. Thus on one splendid sardonyx of large dimensions,\* we find XEPE KAI XAPITOMENH written for *χαίρε κεχαριτωμένη*; the sound of both to the ear being then, as now, identical in the spoken tongue.

Besides the peculiarities in the mode of representing the divine personages who alone were accounted worthy, in those times, of being sculptured in so precious a substance, this extreme corruption of the orthography, which shows itself on numerous pieces of this description, points to a very low period of the empire for the date of their production. Besides this, there are strong historical reasons (to be considered further on) why they cannot well be supposed anterior to the times of the Comnenian dynasty, under whose long and prosperous sway learning revived, and the arts, such as they were, flourished with a sickly rejuvenescence. This attribution is strongly confirmed by the inscription accompanying the figure of Christ standing between the Virgin and St. John, cut in *intaglio* on the back of a *cameo* of the Angelical Salutation. (No. 264, Bib. Imp.) This inscription, ΘΚΕ. ΒΟΗΘΙ. ΤΗΝ. ΔΟΥΤΑΙΝ. C. ΑΝΑ, "Mother of God, protect thy servant, Anna!" is plausibly referred, by Chabouillet, to that famous literary princess, Anna Comnena; though, in another point of view, it is somewhat difficult to conceive how this erudite authoress could have put up with such extraordinary blunders in the spelling, affecting, as

\* British Museum, formerly Hertz.



she does, such Attic purity in her own compositions. Ignorance like this would better suit the *barbarian* extraction and decrepid epoch of Anne of Savoy, wife of Andronicus III., about 1328.

These religious explanatory legends were, however, introduced upon camei before the year A.D. 820, for the Pope Nicholas I., then writing to the Emperor Michael Balbus, has this expression: "Quare Nomen Novum scriptum in calculo vel *gemma* non adoremus?" and the old "Trésor de St. Denys" formerly boasted of "un grand lapis d'azur enchassé en un tableau d'or, taillé à l'antique industriusement ayant d'un costé l'image de Nostre Seigneur en relief avec ces lettres IC XC; et de l'autre celle de la Sacrée Vierge Marie avec ces lettres MP. ΘΥ. le tableau est enrichi de perles et de pierreries." Possibly the gift of the Emperor Heraclius, who is named as the donor to King Dagobert of the preceding item, "Un tres beau reliquaire d'argent doré audedans duquel est enclose une espaule de S. Jean Baptiste (Trésor de S. D. p. 94). Again, some data as to the age that produced these works in such profusion may be obtained by comparing their style with that of the Comnenian bezants; for the two centuries of war and poverty that followed the recapture of Constantinople by the Palæologi (which have scarcely left us a *medal*) cannot be supposed to have bequeathed to us any memorials in this sumptuous department of art.

Again, we must bear in mind the long series of years during which any such representations were prohibited in the capital as utterly idolatrous, the period of the Iconoclasts. This period commences with the reign of Leo the Isaurian (A.D. 717), who, with his successor, Constantine Copronymus, carefully erased from the churches all pictures of the *Saviour* and of the *Virgin*, allowing no other emblem than the *Cross* to be there erected. Their motives for this expurgation were set forth in the inscription placed under the grand cross erected above the gate of the palace, Chalce:—

Ἀφῶνον εἶδος καὶ προῆς ἑξημέτερον  
Χριστὸν γράφεισθαι μὴ φέρων ὁ θεσπότης,  
Ὡς γενητὴ ταῖς γραφαῖς πατομένην,  
Λίαν, σὺν ὁμῇ τῇ νύ Κωνσταντινῇ,

σταυρὸν χαράττει τῶν τρισολβίων τόπων  
κάυχημα, πιστῶν ἐν πόλει ἀνακτόρων.\*

The same prohibition was rigidly enforced by Leo the Armenian, and by Michael Balbus. It was not until the year 842 that Theodora restored the use of images in churches. Hence it follows that the space of a century and a half is left completely barren of any productions of Byzantine art, even in the limited sphere to which it had long before this epoch been restricted.

It is universally accepted that all mediæval camei are due to the Byzantine engravers exclusively, but Chabouillet controverts the dogma in an excellent essay entitled, *La Glyptique au Moyen Age* (Rév. Archéol. 1854, p. 550). In this he attempts to establish the existence of a series of camei independent of the acknowledged and numerous Byzantine. He illustrates his argument by exquisite engravings of three examples, in which the treatment both of forms and drapery exhibits much of the early Italian manner. The first, Christ teaching two of his disciples, a third at his side, the heads in profile, half-length figures, he ascribes to the tenth century; the next, Christ standing beneath a lofty vine, his drapery loose and flowing, is, according to him, a work of the thirteenth; and the third, a most elaborate composition, of the highest finish, enclosed within a rim, representing the Adoration of the Magi, he places at the close of the fifteenth. These examples illustrate most aptly Vasari's obscure allusion to the continued, though feeble, vitality of the art in Rome, and its revival there about the date last mentioned.

\* "That a dumb image, and devoid of breath,  
Material earthy, by its paint defiled,  
Should figure Christ, seemed sin not to be borne  
To the emperor Leo, and prince Constantine.  
The Cross, the glory of the thrice-blessed place,  
Our pious sovereigns plant above their portals."





COMPLIMENTARY OR INSCRIPTION CAMEL.

THIS peculiar gem work which appears to have chiefly busied the engravers of the Lower Empire, when employed by the fashionable public, presents in its extreme neatness and elegance of execution a wonderful contrast to the class we have been last considering. They consist of *inscriptions* alone, cut in relief upon the onyx of two layers (*nicolo*), more rarely on the burnt carnelian, its substitute, and framed as it were within a rim, or the more elaborate myrtle garland, reserved in the layer serving for the letters. The latter are usually engraved with extreme regularity, in form strongly agreeing with those that appear first upon Constantine's mintage, when a peculiarly compact and even character replaced the sprawling, unclosed type that had through the preceding century prevailed upon the coins. On this account they may be properly assigned to the times of Constantine and his immediate successors, an attribution also borne out by the purport of the legends themselves. This distinctive style of engraving in relief affords nothing beyond mere inscriptions, as far as my experience extends, unless the Anubis, a frequent Gnostic device formerly in my collection, be admitted as an exception to the rule. This singular monument, *relieved* in a green and white onyx, and surrounded with a circle, in execution precisely agreed with that of the class we are discussing.

Another proof of the lateness of the times that manufactured these camei in such profusion—other imagery being then, as it would appear, condemned as idolatrous—may be deduced from the *phonetic* orthography very general in them. It offers also some curious anomalies to the student of the transitional state of the Latin tongue, when the *spoken* language was fast assuming the shape of the present Italian. The Greek and the Latin characters are employed indifferently, and the B of the former replaces the V whenever the hard sound of the latter has to be expressed (for at that period the V *initial* had only the force of our W); thus we have VIBAS LVXVRI HOMO BONE.

Again, the Greek legends, infinitely the most frequent,\* perpetually exhibit the so-called Romaic pronunciation of the vowels, as XEPETE, for χαίπετε, and are often extremely hard to decipher, despite their clearness, from this interchange of equivalent letters, their similarity in form,† and their close juxtaposition. This confusion led to a most ludicrous mistranslation of one in the Hertz cabinet beginning with ΣΤΡΑΤΟΝΙΚΗ.ΥΓΙΑΙΝΕ, which last word being read ΜΙΑΙΝΟΥΣΑ by the most pedantic of Teutons employed to draw up the catalogue, was interpreted as conveying a grossly insulting address‡ to the lady, instead of a good wish, its actual purport.

Of these inscriptions, forming a large class which may be designated "Presentation," or "Complimentary" camei, the majority contain nothing more than a name and a good wish, as EGNATI-NIKA. "Success to thee, Egnatius!" Others, more full, are probably of the nature of spells, intended to protect the beloved object to whom the ring set therewith was presented. Else it were difficult to perceive the appropriateness of the formula to be found written more or less at full length on a large number of the class. ΟΥ ΦΙΛΩ ΕΕ ΜΗ ΠΛΑΝΩ—ΝΩΩ (or ΒΛΕΠΩ) ΔΕ ΣΕ ΚΑΙ ΓΕΛΩ—Ο ΦΟΡΩΝ ΖΗΣΑΙΣ ΠΟΛΛΟΙΣ ΧΡΟΝΟΙΣ. "I love thee not, lest I lead thee astray,

\* Greek, the language of polite society, was evidently then accounted the fitting vehicle for compliments, to the same degree as the Norman French for the *chansons* and mottoes equally frequent on mediæval rings.

† Due to the unavoidable omission of the diacritical strokes.

‡ "Thou art a defiling palanquin," or "palanquin bearer!"



but I think upon (behold) thee, and I smile. Wearer, mayest thou live many years!" So strange a combination of disparagement with compliment, Chabouillet plausibly accounts for by supposing the gem presented as a charm against the Evil Eye.\*

Another, and a very common one, exactly answering to our emblem of the flower Forget-me-not, in a similar relation, is a hand pinching an ear, with **MNHMONEYE**, "Remember!" For the ancients placed in the ear the seat of the memory, to which Virgil refers when he makes Apollo remind Tityrus of his duty:—

"Cynthia aurem—vellit et admonuit."

In a curious example (Marlborough Gems), the "Herculeus Nodus," or True Lover's Knot, is introduced, being the received symbol of matrimony.

Another is not unfrequent. **ΕΝΦΗΜΕΙΤΩ ΑΙΘΗΡ ΚΑΙ ΓΑ  
ΣΤΑΤΩ Δ ΑΗΡ ΣΤΑΤΩ ΠΟΝΤΟΣ**. "Hushed be sky and earth;  
still the air, still the sea!" Two explanations of this singular adjuration suggest themselves; either that the stone was to be worn by a person performing some magical ceremony—at least the sorceress in Theocritus (Id. ii.) speaks of the stillness of the elements as something essential to the success of her incantations; or else this formula may have been accounted appropriate for a birthday gift—an inference to be deduced from the lines of Propertius upon Cynthia's natal day:—

"Transeat hic sine nube dies, stent requere venti  
Ponat et in sicco molliter unda minas"—(iii. x. 5).

Persius also (i. 16) talks of the "birthday<sup>†</sup>sardonyx," thereby throwing light upon the circumstances under which similar presents were made, and elucidating inscriptions otherwise altogether enigmatical.†

\* Even now in Greece the fatal effect of admiring an object is counteracted by spitting at it; which a mother will often request to be performed towards her child if inadvertently over-praised by a stranger.

This address is the earliest example anywhere to be found of a Greek rhyming couplet, to be read according to the accent—

οὐ φιλῶ σε μὴ πλανῶ,  
νοῶ δὲ σε καὶ γελῶ.

† There is a striking and amusing analogy between these glyptic compliments and

Some of these complimentary formulæ offer names which one cannot help referring to personages who make a figure in the history of the Lower Empire. Take this example (Uzielli Gems), ΠΑΛΛΑΔΙ . ΕΥΤΥΧΙ . ΜΕΤΑ . ΕΙΕΡΟΚΛΙΗΣ, "Prosperity unto thee, Palladius, with thy wife Hieroclea!" where the orthography of the lady's name points to an Alexandrian origin. Can this Palladius be the Prefect of Egypt under Constantius II., so roundly abused by Gregory Nazianzen (orat. xxv. 12) as the bitter persecutor of the Catholic party, at the time of the deposition of Athanasius? Another Palladius appears upon the stage in the following century as all-powerful under the Emperor Honorius. Again, a most interesting memorial of this kind, and the sole example that has ever come under my notice yet preserving its original setting, a gold ring of the quaintest form, and the smallest circuit, evidently intended for the top joint of the little finger (now in my possession), reads in two lines exquisitely cut on nicolo, ΕΥΤΥΧΙ ΕΥΨΕΒΙ, and therefore may be allowed to pass as having originally graced the hand of the arrogant chamberlain of the first-named emperor, the impartial persecutor at one and the same time of the Cæsar Julian and of the Patriarch Athanasius.

Again, many give no more than the name and title of the wearer, as ΕΡΜΑΔΙΩΝ . ΚΑΙΣΑΡΟΣ, "Hermadion, one of Cæsar's household." Others offer maxims of morality, amongst which one is a special favourite, and Caylus recommends every philosopher to take it for his motto, ΛΕΓΟΥΝCΙΝ . Α . ΘΕΛΟΥCΙΝ . ΛΕΓΕΤΩCΑΝ . ΟΥ . ΜΕΛΕΙ . ΜΟΙ.\*

the Chinese *Jou-y*, "wishes of good augury," presented on New Year's Day, or on the occasion of a birth, or appointment to office. But here the medium is the national vehicle of art, porcelain, not a gem. These presentation vases are inscribed with "Happiness," "Longevity," "Fortune, Honours, Eternal Spring," "Longevity equal to that of the Mountain of the South, Happiness ample as the Sea of the East!" And sometimes the good wish is expressed more definitely, "May you get the title of *Chang-youai*," i. e., Senior Wrangler!

\* Exactly rendered by the motto of the old Scottish baron, placed over his door—

"Men say—What say they?  
Wha cares: let them say!"





## BARBARIC CAMEL.

CAMEL in the purely Oriental style are extremely rare ; a few examples, nevertheless, and of much interest, have come under my observation. A finely-executed Brahminese bull, *passant*, in flat relief, in agate-onyx, ✓ may perhaps be assigned rather to Greek than to Indian art, as it probably belonged to the epoch of the Greco-Bactrian kingdom, when that sacred animal formed a common type for the coinage—from which region this example had been brought in a parcel of other gems. In the same company came a head of Buddha in front face, an unmistakable production of Hindoo taste—a monument of the supremacy of the ancient Jaina princes, perhaps one of Asoka's own jewels, cut on a sardonyx of considerable extent. Amongst the most curious of such examples in the Assyrian manner ever seen by me, was a lion *couchant*, done in the stiffest and most laboured style, showing the little power the engraver possessed to embody his idea in the obdurate material, a sardonyx of three layers most beautifully coloured. But the most important of the class is the Vaini cameo (figured by Raspe, No. 653), of a helmeted head, in a very archaic style, surrounded by a legend in Persepolitan cuneiform letters, perhaps the earliest gem-portrait in existence, being necessarily anterior to the Macedonian Conquest.

Amongst the Pulsy gems, I was struck with the fragment of a large work representing a man habited as a Sassanian king engaged in combat with some monster, now deficient. The king's head is encircled by a diadem terminating in the broad, floating ribbons, so conspicuous in the rock-cut sculptures commemorating Sapor I. The execution of this cameo is surprisingly good, and to be compared to that of the Roman Imperial of the best age—far superior, indeed, to the contemporary style of European art; in fact, were it not for the costume, one would be inclined to refer it to a much earlier period. It, however, like the masterly amethyst-intaglio of Varahran Kermanshah, affords a full confirmation of the statement before advanced as to the wonderful revival of the arts under the restored Zoroastrian dynasty, and doubtless comes from the hand of some Asiatic Greek patronized by the magnificent Sassanian. The composition, according to the usage of the Lower Empire school, is enclosed within a circular moulding reserved in the upper stratum of the sardonix.

Besides the two Indian pieces above described, Cabul has furnished to the Bolton collection a magnificent cameo, Victory in her biga,\* most bold and vigorous in its treatment, and stamped with the true impress of a Grecian origin—a striking testimony to the diffusion of Hellenic taste through the northern provinces of India. The projecting portions of the relief are much worn down and flattened by attrition, apparently from the pebbles of some river-bed, whence at last it had been fortunately rescued by the native agate-gatherer.

But the most remarkable example of all in the Oriental class, although of modern origin, came to my knowledge amongst the Webb gems (when sold by Christie and Manson, in 1854). The subject is the feat of Shah Jēhan,† his cutting asunder with the utmost *non-*

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\* Evidently copied from the type of the reverse of Philip's gold stater.

† The inscription consists of two parts—"The portrait of the second Sahib-Kiran, Shah Jehan, the victorious emperor," and the artist's signature, "Made by Kan Atem." Its date probably is the early part of his reign, for he has a moustache but no beard, which last is seen in his usual portraits. Round his neck, besides a long double row of big pearls, he wears for pendant a great oval convex gem, to all appearance the actual Koh-i-noor.



*chalance* the monstrous lion that has just borne to the ground one of the courtiers, who lies prostrate underneath him. The history is given in minute elegant Persian caligraphy, filling the entire field. The taste of the whole is purely Eastern, and might have belonged to Chosroes himself, so unchangeable is Persian art, and the engraver's name declares him a Persian. Yet one would have looked for a work in the Italian style to commemorate so notable an event in the Shah's career, when one remembers the patronage extended by the Moguls to the lapidaries of that nation, the court jeweller at that very time being a Venetian, Ortensio Borghis. The stone, a sardonyx of the finest quality and unusual extent, being nearly two inches in diameter, is traversed by a minute perforation, after the manner so often observable in the specimens employed by the ancients. Shah Jehan is recorded by Bernier as the best judge of precious stones then living in the East. This interesting monument attests also his love of the glyptic art, to encourage which he has not scrupled to set at nought one of the most stringent prohibitions of his religion, the carving of images. This unique specimen of modern Oriental art passed into the cabinet of L. Fould, and thence recently into the Bibliothèque Impériale. It has been figured and described by Chabouillet in the '*Révue Archéologique*' for 1869.





#### WORKS "EN RONDE BOSSE." PHALERÆ.

HEADS, and even busts in full relief, admirably carved out of the amethyst, jacinth, sard, turquoise, garnet, and of much larger dimensions in calcedony, exist in considerable numbers, but with an equally small proportion of the *true* antique amongst them, as in every other description of cameo-work. This fact is easily accounted for by the extreme facility with which such pieces could be produced by the modern process (though full of difficulties in the ancient mode of attacking their material), and the tempting reward that stimulated the artists of the Revival to aim at a successful imitation of the antique models in this line.

That, indeed, busts and even statuettes cut out of entire gems were known to the ancients from an early period, appears from Pliny's statement, that when the *topazios* (peridot) was first brought into the Alexandrian market, it at once came into the highest favour, and a statue of Queen Arsinoë, four cubits high (of separate pieces necessarily), carved out of it, was dedicated by her daughter, Berenice, within the celebrated "Golden Temple" erected to her memory. For this somewhat fabulous-looking tale Juba was his authority, but he



mentions having actually seen a statuette of Nero in armour, fifteen inches high, carved in a jasper; and also figures of Augustus in obsidian, an equally hard material. To the use of the calcedony for this purpose he must allude in the words, "*Jam e cerea* (achate) *staticula atque equorum ornamenta*," where *staticula* can only be understood of the ornamental weights attached to the ends of the chlamys, to make it sit well on the figure; the *ποισκοί* of the Greeks.

Of genuine relics in this style now extant, the most notable are the head of Tiberius (Florence), in a stone, "as big as a walnut," resembling the turquoise; and the agate bust, four inches high, of Constantine, long the boast of the Sainte Chapelle. The devout emperor is sculptured with eyes raised to heaven, the Cross conspicuously placed upon his breastplate. From time immemorial it tipped the "*bâton de chœur*," of the chief dignitary of the Chapelle. The old attribution of the head to Valentinian junior, appears to me the more correct; the profile is certainly not that of Constantine. The same cabinet possesses a replica of this, but much mutilated, coming from the Jesuits' College, Toulon. At Florence are busts (ranging to the same size) of Titus, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Plotina, and Sabina, admirably carved in calcedony, and in sard-agate. Some very singular examples are known to myself; an owl, half the size of life, done with admirable spirit in lapis-lazuli, evidently once the companion of a Pallas in the precious metals, such as may well be supposed to have graced the *Lararium* of Domitian. Another rarity was a full length Osiris in half-relief, upon a true ruby of considerable size. But as regards the latter, it is a necessary warning, which finds its place very appropriately here, that the greater part of so-called *ruby* camei are of modern origin, and done in pink garnets foiled up to the required colour. Some heads, indeed, occur in nearly full relief, executed in emeralds of such magnitude and beauty—for example, the Medusa in the Devonshire *parure*—that it seems out of the question that any artist, except in the times of Neronian extravagance, should have been granted so precious a medium for the exhibition of his skill. There is,

however, no class of antiques with regard to which criticism is more fallacious than similar works in the precious stones.

Amongst really antique pieces in calcedony, one sort perpetually occurs, always invariable in design, though in execution varying from that indicating the best, down to the basest art of the imperial school. They represent a child's head in full face, are of considerable extent, sometimes as much as three inches in diameter. This child's head\* usually passes for Cupid's, though a broad, flat plume, or perhaps a tress, laid down the division of his smooth, evenly-parted hair, would better justify our assigning its original to Harpocrates, a protective deity ranking almost as high in the later creeds of the Empire as Isis herself. The face, also, appears somewhat too infantine in its chubbiness to be that of the arch and curly-headed boy-god. These hemispheres† are perforated through their diameter with large holes crossing each other. Their use is explained by the cenotaph (Mayence) representing a Roman officer arrayed in all his military decorations, the tribune, M. Coelius, "slain in the disaster under Varus." As many as five heads are fixed on his *lorica*, the centre one the Gorgon's; the others Bacchic and ivy-crowned; a very instructive exemplification of the proper destination of these figures. Doubtless they served as amulets as well as decorations—"decus et tutamen in armis."

One such lately acquired by the British Museum, out of a collection formed in Persia, has preserved a most interesting memorial of the victory won by the "king of kings" over some one of his Byzantine adversaries. The Sassanian soldier into whose hands the trophy had fallen, caught at the idea suggested by its hemispherical form and its perforations to convert it into one of his own national seals, and a

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\* Precisely the same, but surmounted by a *wheel*, a sure indication of its solar character, occurs as the ornament of a terra-cotta antefix found at Isca Silurum.

† The large imperial heads in the same stone no doubt formed the central ornament of the highly adorned breastplate worn by the tribunes. Innumerable sculptures show the Gorgon's head so introduced. The most magnificent example known, the Marlborough, had originally protected a Cæsar's breast; and the same honour may be claimed by the Blacas Gorgoneion of a vast amethyst, four inches in diameter.



record of his triumph at the same time, by cutting upon the flat surface a somewhat intricate device. At the top is a Victory of the true Byzantine type, surrounded by some illegible letters, seemingly Pehlevi monograms; below are two game-cocks standing over two crouching headless figures of men; lastly, and occupying all the lower half, the bust of the Persian monarch, wearing the tiara, six stars upon his breast, and surrounded by the legend reading plainly, "Apestan Varahran," *the believer Varanes*. The execution, of the coarsest, seems to fix its date to the age of the last king of the name.

Such cherub heads are occasionally to be met with displaying considerable art, and made of the finer species of the calcedony of extraordinary beauty. Examples are: one (the Townley) in a pure cacholong exactly resembling ivory; and another (the Marlborough) in an exquisite girasol, converted by the taste of some Italian devotee of the Cinque-cento epoch into a lovely angel, by the addition of wings in gold. Such precious sculptures appear to have superseded, under the Empire, the original *phaleræ* so often exhibited as rewards of military merit upon the consular denarii, and which at the time were evidently composed of hollow bosses in the precious metals, strung upon rods forming a square diagonally intersected, of a span each way. Virgil explains the construction by his

"—phaleras Rhamnetis et aurea bullis\* Cingula."

Amongst the most important historical camei in the French cabinet ranks the splendid sardonyx with the heads of Severus and Julia side by side, and facing those of Caracalla and Geta similarly disposed. This piece, besides its intrinsic value (its dimensions being  $4 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$  inches, in a material of the most perfect quality as regards the colour and distinctness of its strata), has also no small merit in the point of art. The portraits show considerable character, although certain inaccuracies in the drawing, as Millin observes, and the too great sharpness of the outlines, bespeak a period when art was drawing fast

\* Of which the Genoese necklaces of large hollow gilt spheres, tastefully embossed, preserve the reminiscence.

towards the decline, a change which manifested itself earlier in gem-engraving than in sculpture. This work must have been finished immediately after the death of Severus, for he is represented with the radiated crown, symbol of deification, whilst Caracalla exhibits on his shoulder the ægis with the Gorgoneion, a distinction belonging to the reigning emperor exclusively. But what adds greatly to the archaeological value of the monument, and has a special bearing upon the subject before us, is the fact that upon the ægis, by the side of the Gorgon's head, there is fixed a large oval gem, perfectly corresponding, as its relative proportions show, with this identical cameo, and hence one may more than conjecture, declaring the exact use for which this very jewel was designed. At least nothing of the same form is to be seen fixed thus conspicuously upon the ægis of any other imperial bust; there must therefore have been some strong motive for giving this large oval object so much prominence in the present case.

The circular disk always employed for securing like a large button the paludamentum upon the emperor's shoulder, whether in statues, medals, or gems, was, according to Millin (as indeed had struck myself before seeing his remark), either a precious stone or a cameo. And what confirms this idea, is that Heliodorus makes the *περόνη* fastening the chlamys of his hero Theagenes, "a Minerva of amber," which cannot imply more of the figure of the goddess than her bust carved in that precious substance. Such reliefs in amber were the prototypes of the similar sculptures in jacinth. It is, moreover, not unlikely that the large bossy heads in calcedony, already described as employed in sets for composing the phaleræ, served likewise, singly, as fastenings for the military cloak. One of the largest examples known to me was in the Praun collection, on a stone three inches in diameter, and passing in the catalogue for the head of Isis. It was traversed with holes for strings crossing each other diagonally, and may serve to explain Sidonius's description of the fastening to the robe of the goddess Roma:—

" . . . quidquid summa refudit  
Tegminis hoc patulo concludit gemma recessu."





CAMEI OF THE REVIVAL.

EVER since the first revival of the glyptic art, engravers, more especially those of the two centuries following that epoch (which may be fixed at the middle of the fifteenth, in the pontificate of Paul II.), have produced infinitely more camei than intagli. The execution of the former, besides presenting far fewer difficulties than that of sinking the intaglio into the stone, had the recommendation of being infinitely more expeditious, now that the operation was entirely performed by the *wheel*. In fact, no very great amount of either skill or practice is at present required to produce a creditable performance\* in cameo, whilst the ornamental appearance of such works caused them to be passionately sought after in those times of exaggerated display and costliness of dress. For example, Vasari relates that his great Mæcenas of the arts, Cardinal Ippolito dei Medici, as he was taking leave of his friends on his departure for France (where he died, in 1535), pulled from his own neck a chain whence hung a cameo valued at above six

\* I was informed by a *working* cameo-cutter that the Roman dealers in articles of *vertù* paid at the wholesale price no more than six paoli (three shillings) apiece for the very neatly done heads of poets, philosophers, &c., in onyx, so largely purchased by dilettanti for wearing in studs and rings.

hundred ducats, and presenting it to Giovanni del Castel Bolognese, bade him keep till he should return to redeem the same.\* This fashion of having camei for pendants to chains was then at its height, as also that of wearing them in the hat, replacing the gold or gilt medallions of the preceding century. Amongst her Majesty's camei, an admirable profile likeness of François I., in a yellow and white onyx, makes the centre of the most superb enamelled pendant-jewel remaining to us from those splendour-loving times. The oval frame enclosing it has on either side Mars and Cupid, full-length figures, serving as supporters; a second Cupid reclines above; at the bottom lies coiled the monarch's well-known device, the Salamander. At the back of the cameo is a group of Apollo and Daphne, in full relief, affixed to and covering the extent of the mounting. From the legend beneath, significant in its application, *DAPHNEM PHEBVS AMAT*, it may be conjectured this masterpiece of the artist-goldsmith's craft was designed for a gift to some lady of the name of Laura, the enslaver for the moment of the amorous king. These figurines are elegantly designed and perfectly modelled, the enamel upon them is admirably coloured, and quite unimpaired. As *breloques*, several small cameo heads of the same date are fastened by short chains; the best amongst them is a veiled Ceres, on a large, fine-coloured turquoise. Hence it is that we have so large a number of camei, the shapes of which sufficiently indicate the purpose for which they were intended—to fringe the tasteful enamelled frames, those labours of love of the Cinque-cento goldsmith.

The artists of the times were fond of displaying their own skill in rivalry with that of the ancients, whence we so frequently find a Renaissance cameo cut upon the reverse of an antique. The Marlborough cabinet offers an admirable example of this contest in the fine cameo presented by Clement VII. to Charles V., at their interview of pacification; the original being the head of Commodus, the addition that of Hercules. It is mounted for a pendant in a massy gold frame,

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\* This cameo was afterwards bought of the engraver by Card. Farnese (Paul III.), and, therefore, may be supposed to still exist in the Farnese Cabinet, Naples.



enamelled in black with a running vine. To this spirit of emulation we often owe a convenient means for comparing the styles of the two periods, where in truth not unfrequently the unprejudiced eye must award the palm to the more recent competitor.

When camei first became known in this country they went by the name of *agate-stones*. Vanderdoort so designates all entered in his inventory of Charles the First's collection of pictures and other works of art. When Shakespeare says that Queen Mab is "in shape no bigger than the agate-stone on the forefinger of an alderman," he evidently means to compare the fairy to the *shape* or tiny figure engraved upon this agate-stone, otherwise his simile would be incorrect, for mere shape and material have no points of analogy. He cannot be supposed to mean that her form was round or oval like that of the gem itself. Gorlaeus, his contemporary, appears in the portrait prefixed to his "*Dactyliotheca*"\* wearing a huge ring on the *forefinger* of his right hand.

From the infinite profusion of such objects, multiplied by artists of every degree of merit during a space of four centuries, a period actually exceeding in duration the flourishing existence of this branch amongst the ancients, it will readily be discerned how small is the chance of meeting with a truly antique cameo amongst the myriads arrogating to themselves that honour. An observation this supported by the vast experience of Raspe, who remarks (727): "*La plupart des camées nous paraissent être des ouvrages du Cinque-cento.*" My own observation too fully confirms his dictum, for in the numerous cabinets examined by me since 1845, not one cameo in fifty presents the criteria of indisputable authenticity; however much amateurs, and, still more, the dealers, may be disposed to controvert the truth of this by no means "a most comfortable doctrine."

I have already pointed out the poverty of the material, the German agate-onyx, to which the artists of the Revival were confined in consequence of the cessation of the Indian supply—another reason for their working so frequently, as above observed, on the

\* James I. purchased his gems from his heirs for Henry, Prince of Wales. Some of them I recognised in the (former) Arundel Cabinet.

backs of ancient camei, and again of substituting their own reliefs for ancient of small importance, but which preoccupied a fine material then unattainable by any other means. For the same reason, too, they worked so many camei in the single-coloured stones, garnet, lapis-lazuli, carnelian, little employed by the ancients for the purpose because the effect of the relief in such materials is lost from the absence of contrast between the ground and the design. This age also produced heads in ruby and similar hard stones, *tours de force* that have nothing to recommend them beyond the difficulties overcome in effecting them, a spurious enhancement of value, and one entirely disregarded by correct taste. The same scarcity of better materials, affording layers of distinct colours, led to the extensive utilization of *shells*, in which the natural contrasts of the coats imitate, though poorly, those of the Indian sardonyx, an art which the modern Romans still exercise, and with extraordinary cleverness. In our day the *conchs* of tropical seas supply a medium abounding in the most beautiful contrasts of light and shade, and the richest tints; but the ingenious Italians of better times were forced to content themselves with the poor shells of the Mediterranean, and to throw away an infinity of genius and of time upon these dull-coloured and perishable materials. Yet even these were valued at the time, for the bracelets of Diane de Poitiers, preserved in the Paris cabinet, exquisite works of art, are no better as to their nature;\* and the Kensington Museum possesses busts of the Cæsars in the same substitute, from the hand of a master. But the most wonderful specimens known to me exist in the Marlborough Collection; one a Battle-piece, the other, the Triumph of Bacchus; masterly in composition both, and crowded with figures most delicately finished. The same richly-stored cabinet contains one of the earliest essays in this line, the busts of the Three Kings of Cologne, a piece exhibiting all the characteristics of the Quattro-cento school. The use of shells for this purpose, it is pretended, was known to the ancients, and specimens of such claiming to be antique have occasionally been

\* Each bracelet is formed by seven plaques, containing severally some beast of chase, in enamelled gold frames, connected together by short chains.



brought before me: for example, a Head of a Nymph, said to have been found in a vase at Vulei, and which certainly did not in appearance belie its asserted origin. But it seems impossible that a substance so readily decomposable could have remained unchanged for that enormous lapse of time when buried in the earth: it is a much safer conclusion to look upon all such exceptional rarities as no more than skilful imitations of the antique style. And the same caution holds good for the camei, tolerably frequent in a material not much more durable, the turquoise, which never retains its proper colour if long exposed to damp, becoming green, and in process of time almost chalky.

Whole classes of Renaissance camei may at once be recognised by their subjects, a point already discussed in the section upon Roman art; but there are a few observations that naturally fall under the present heading. Castellani has pointed out to me that the countless number of cameo Medusas one meets with, in *three-quarter*\* face, with the eyes staring wide, owe all of them their birth to the much-talked-of Medusa painted by Da Vinci before his departure from Florence in 1500. The Florentine engravers at once set about reproducing an original so admirable in its grotesqueness—the reason that these pieces are often done in so early a manner as easily to pass for the true Roman. The same age was, a little later, extremely fruitful in heads of *negroes*, and also of *negresses*, the latter often in the character of Cleopatra holding to her breast the asp. There is reason to believe that some of the latter are intended to commemorate the renowned black concubine of Clement VII., the mother of Alessandro dei Medici. Such heads are never found antique. Another reason, besides the celebrity of the sable beauty, that prompted the Florentine school to produce such swarms of miniature Ethiopians, was their discovery of the secret of staining black one of the layers of the common agate-onyx, and obtaining thus the contrast, so great a desideratum in this style.

As this art enjoyed the especial patronage of the great, it has

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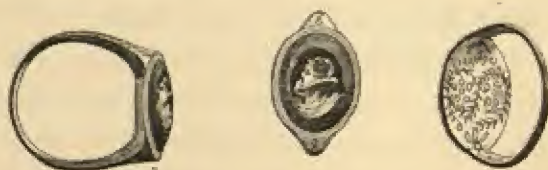
\* A posture not met with in the antique treatment of this subject; which only knows the Gorgoneion, a living Fury, in full face, and the Medusa, a dying beauty, in profile.

naturally been carried to its highest perfection in the department of portraits. Those of the sovereigns of the age equal in excellence and sometimes rival in magnitude those of the imperial school. Rossi's cameo of Cosimo I. and his family is a sardonyx, eight inches in diameter: Nassaro's masterpiece, François I., half that size: Il Greco's bust of Henri II. has been already noticed: amongst the Orleans gems was another of Charles V., in armour, identical with Titian's portrait (but assigned by the very stupid La Chaux to Frederic Barbarossa), which from its peculiar treatment must certainly have come from the same master-hand. That emperor's son in consequence of his liberal appreciation of the talents of Birago and Jacopo Trezzo, has had the good fortune of being immortalized in this manner with inimitable skill. Of such memorials of this man of refined taste, though gloomy bigot, the most important is the Bessborough sardonyx (No. 200), presenting his bust in half relief in white upon a rich chocolate-coloured ground. The treatment is identical with that of the same portrait, though somewhat smaller, now in the Royal cabinet. The latter may, with good reason, be supposed a present from the Spanish king to either Mary or Elizabeth; it is mentioned in the list of Charles I.'s camei, drawn up by its keeper, Vanderdoort, in 1637. On the reverse of the Bessborough gem is engraved the mysterious device of an eagle soaring aloft with a serpent in his talons, legend, *NIHIL EST QVOD NON TOLLERET QVI PERFECTE DILIGIT*; indicating perhaps the destination of the jewel for a love-token to the *Virago*-queen, in the years preceding the date when repeated disappointment had made the old wooer take to a more violent mode of laying siege to the Crown of England. There is a third portrait (Marlborough, No. 366) of nearly equal merit, but in a different material, a very fine European topaz. After the magnificent cameo of Constantius, the gem of her Majesty's collection is the large cameo-bust of Queen Elizabeth, commonly, though very absurdly, ascribed to Il Vicentino (who died twelve years before her accession to the throne), and by others to Coldoré, for whose date, on the other hand, the features are too youthful. Its style bears so much analogy to those just described, that one



is tempted to pronounce it the work of Philip's own engraver, perhaps done after a miniature, in their friendly days. Coldoré, however, has a better claim, on the score of style, to the smaller cameo, No. 57, in the Devonshire *parure*, still retaining in the back of its quaintly enamelled locket the two much faded miniatures of herself and the Earl of Leicester, by Hilliard, the queen's own "limner."

That erudite tyrant, our Henry VIII., extended his patronage to the new art with the most happy results. Witness the large cameo (Devonshire) of the busts of himself and his three children, the first in full face, the others in profile: a second of himself, with the infant Edward wearing a baby's cap, both in front face: a third of himself alone: the last two in the Royal Collection. All these are in the same style, in very flat relief, and finished in every detail with the precision of a miniature. They present the remarkable peculiarity of having the counterpart of the relief repeated in *intaglio* on the back. Again, in the above-quoted *parure*, No. 48, is a bust of Edward VI. adult, indubitably from the same hand. The engraver is unknown, but beyond a doubt he was one of the several Italian artists in Henry's pay; perhaps Luca Penni, the painter and copper-plate engraver. With the latter art, gem engraving was often combined, as in the case of Caraglio, at that very time engraver to Sigismund of Poland. There is a remarkable coincidence between the camei and the first real portrait of the king upon his coinage of 1542, which is nearly full faced, and is quite free from the mediæval stiffness of that upon his previous mintages.





#### RINGS, THEIR ORIGIN AND USE.

A most fitting text to the following dissertation will be furnished by the advice given upon this point by the learned Clemens Alexandrinus to the Christians of the second century. (*Pædag.* ii. 11.) "Moreover, men ought not to wear their ring upon the top joint of the finger, for that is only fit for women, but upon the little finger, and to thrust it down also as far as it will go; for thus the hand can be readily used for all necessary purposes, and the signet-ring will not drop off very easily, being retained by the projection of the joint in the finger itself. And let the engraving upon the gem be either a dove or a fish, or a ship running before the wind, or a musical lyre, which was the device used by Polycrates, or a ship's anchor, which Seleucus had cut upon his signet. And if it represent a man fishing, the wearer will be put in mind of the Apostles, as well as of the little children drawn up out of the water. But we must not engrave on it images of idols, which we are forbidden even to look at; nor a sword nor bow, for we are followers after peace; nor a drinking goblet, for we are sober men. Yet many of the licentious world wear engravings of their naked minions or mistresses\* in their rings, so that not even if they wish it

\* I have met with a gem (Praun) offering a singular illustration of this remark;



can they at any time enjoy a respite from the torments of desire. We must wear but a single one for the purpose of a signet; all other rings we must cast aside."

Macrobius states that Ateius Capito, an eminent legal authority in the latter days of the Republic, highly censured the custom of wearing figures of the gods engraved in rings, on account of the profanation to which these sacred forms were thereby necessarily exposed. And in this he did but revive the injunction of Pythagoras to his disciples, given many centuries before. This scrupulousness was pushed to such an extent under Tiberius, that people were actually put to death for treason, on the charge of having visited brothels whilst having on their hand a ring set with the portrait of the *deified* Augustus. The ancient gods, however, were left to avenge themselves upon similar acts of impiety.

After the scarabeus fastened by a thread,\* or a wire, had given place to the more commodious form of the finger-ring, the earliest examples of this ornament are beaten out of pure gold, hollow, and very thin. It was in deference to this primitive fashion, that amongst the numerous restrictions laid upon the Flamen Dialis, according to Fabius Pictor (as quoted by A. Gellius, x. 15), he might not wear a ring that had not a hollow shank: "*item annulo uti nisi pervio cascoque fas non est*," *casus* properly signifying a hollow shell like that of an empty nut. Such occur even of the Etruscans, but they are extremely rare; the signets of that conservative people having retained to the very last the primitive beetle-stone, and its simple mounting in the bracelet or the swivel. The most magnificent Etruscan ring known is that

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a fine plasma presenting the nude figure of a girl, her hair dressed in the elaborate *tower* of Trajan's times, and therefore contemporary with the preacher. In the field her lover has eternized her name in large characters, ΘΕΟΦΙΛΑ.

\* Ælian quotes some ancient writer in proof of the luxury of the early Athenians, that they used to appear in public with their hair done up in a bunch, and decorated with *cigule* of gold and other ornaments in that metal. But of finger rings not a word: a plain proof the fashion was as yet unknown at Athens, for it was in the display of that kind of ornament that Greek luxury went to the farthest lengths, as the instances hereafter adduced will abundantly declare.

formerly in the Canino Collection (figured by Micali in the Atlas to his great work), and now fortunately secured for the British Museum at the sale of M. Bööcke's antiquities. It is formed by two lions, whose bodies make up the shank, their heads and fore-paws supporting an elegant beasil in filigree which holds the signet-stone, a small scarabeus charged with a lion *regardant*. The two lions are beaten up in full relief out of thin gold plate in a stiff archaic style, yet exquisitely finished. But the most admirable monument of the ancient goldsmith's taste in designing this ornament is the ring, the glory of the Waterton Dactyliothea, the workmanship of which may be referred either to the pure Etruscan, or to the daughter-school of the early days of the Roman Commonwealth. Two caryatid figures in half-relief, of the Etruscan Hercules and Juno Lanuvina, their feet touching, compose the ring, most admirably chiselled out of the solid gold, and not *repoussé* according to the usual fashion of the age. This magnificent setting, however, only serves to exhibit a complete anti-climax in the most essential part, for it holds a mere white stone, unengraved, perhaps the back of a small scarabeus, and which can only have been dignified with so glorious a mounting on account of some mystic virtue (as of the mediæval toadstone) ascribed to it in the days of its first possessor. Another early example of a *repoussé* ring that has attracted my attention, was one of early Greek date, elegant in design, though rudely carried out; two dolphins, their tails united, forming the body of the ring, whilst their heads bore up the beasil, which contained a mere disk of crystal or white paste, not engraved.

Of the rings found in Greek tombs, many of this hollow and light description, and of very simple patterns although wonderfully well-wrought, are set with round convex pastes imitating the jacinth, the carbuncle, and the opal. Such jewels as these were made, not for the living, but for the dead—the economic invention of ages when faith was waxing dim. In the beginning, the most precious of his possessions accompanied their owner to the next world, and for that end were consumed with him by the flames of the funeral pile. Melissa's ghost complains to her husband, the wealthy lord of Corinth, Periander, that



she was cold and naked in the shades, because the robes buried with her corpse had not been *burnt* with it; whereupon the loving tyrant stripped the women of Corinth, gentle and simple alike, of their best apparel, and made thereof one vast holocaust, in order to supply his wife's *manes* with a fitting wardrobe. And of this same practice Caesar took unworthy advantage in his 'Anti-Cato' to slander the rigid patriot, by accusing him of having *sifted the ashes* of his own brother's funeral pile, that he might recover the gold thread out of the precious robes, gifts from Asiatic princes, which had been consumed with his corpse. Long before this, a law of the Twelve Tables forbade the burning of any gold with a body, "unless that used for fastening false teeth,"

Pliny notices that many people of his times, "out of solicitude for the gem," lest it might be damaged by an accidental fall, if set in a weighty ring, preferred a mounting in thin gold plate stuffed with a lighter material (mastic): "*bractæas leviorē materia infercīre tutius putant.*" Another reason no doubt was that, like their modern representatives, these Italians aimed at making the greatest possible show with the least possible expenditure of the precious metal; for the modern Romans love to set *intagli* for their own wear in bulky rings entirely hollow, the actual weight of the gold in them being amazingly small. It must be remembered that most of the Etruscan jewellery now to be seen, whether crowns, fibulæ, or rings, was *Mortuary*; that is, not made for actual use, but merely to decorate the rich man's corpse when laid out in full attire within his last home. Hence, for obvious reasons, the gold is often a mere leaf punched into shape, and then filled up with mastic to preserve the form. The stuffing, reduced by time to dust, still remains inside many of these decorations of the sepulchre.

These hollow rings are put together with a degree of skill far beyond that of the modern jeweller, for the soldering of their numerous junctures is perfectly imperceptible even when breathed upon, a test under which the most carefully applied modern solder always assumes a whiter tint than the rest. This is due to the different composition of

the ancient—made of chrysocolla (carbonate of copper), verdigris, and *nitrum* (carbonate of soda), mixed with a child's urine, and rubbed down with a copper pestle in a copper mortar. This was called *Santerna*, which bears the stamp of an Asiatic word borrowed from the Lydo-Etruscan goldsmith. Cellini's recipe for solder is: native verdigris, six parts; sal-ammoniac, one; borax, one; ground fine and mixed to a paste with water. The modern, used for gold above sixteen carats fine, is made of gold and silver in equal proportions, to which a little arsenic is added to promote fusibility.

Many early Greek rings retain the form of the class that preceded them, containing scarabei, with the sole exception that the signet no longer revolves upon its axis on a pin, but the shank is now firmly soldered on to the *collet* holding the stone. The latter is generally cut as a scarabeoid, a flat, thick, oval disk, having no *setting edge*, which last came into use subsequently, when the gem had to be fixed in a bed cut out for it in the solid metal. The earliest Greek rings were of base metal, not gold, and had the signet-device cut on their faces. In the tombs at Cumæ engraved gems are never met with, only silver signet-rings coarsely engraved. The same fact may be gathered from various allusions in the Classics. Aristophanes makes the wife talk (*Thes.* 425) of getting the counterpart of her husband's ring made for the trifling sum of half a drachma. And a striking proof of their small value is afforded by Xenophon's notice (*An.* iv. 7), that on dismissing their Armenian guide, having rewarded him out of the common stock with a horse, a suit of clothes, and ten darics, he afterwards asked the soldiers for their rings, and obtained them from several, evidently as keepsakes, not as further payment of his services.

Roman rings also, when of early date and containing intagli in a good style, are almost invariably hollow, light, and therefore easily crushed. This, and some other interesting points, are illustrated by the story Cicero tells about L. Piso, when prætor in Spain (where he fell in battle): "As he was going through the military exercises, the gold ring he wore was by some mischance broken and crushed. Wishing to have another ring made for himself, he ordered a goldsmith to be



summoned into the forum at Corduba, in front of his judgment-seat, and weighed out the gold required to him in public. Then he ordered the man to set down his bench in the forum, and make the ring for him whilst everybody was looking on."\* This was done to prove to the provincials his own scrupulous honesty, and that he had not taken "even half-an-ounce" of gold out of the public treasury, but had merely given his old broken ring to be worked up anew. Cicero tells the anecdote for the benefit of Verres, as a contrast to his mode of dealing with the public revenue of his province. Here we have a picture of the ancient goldsmith carrying about with him a fire-pot and a few tools, like his Hindoo fellow-craftsman in our day, and squatting down to execute his job under the eye of his employer. Ancient rings were always wrought with the hammer, and finished with the same tool,† the ductility of their pure metal permitting, indeed requiring, such a mode of treatment. They were never cast or filed as in the modern way; in fact, any traces of such operations betray the Italian forger's hand, now so lamentably busy in this class of antiques. And this primitive mode of making the ring affords a pretty simile to Ovid (A.A. iii. 221):—

"Annulus ut fiat primo colliditur aurum;"

*To make the ring they first beat up the gold.*

Such hollow rings afforded convenient receptacles for poison, of which their bulky and protuberant shoulders would contain a considerable dose. Of this practice the instances in ancient history are numerous, as the deaths of Hannibal and Demosthenes‡ suffice to show;

\* Scarcely any relic can be imagined of higher interest than a ring now in the Beverley Cabinet, for it was found in one of the sarcophagi of the Scipios, and presented by the Pope, Clement XIII., immediately after to the distinguished antiquary, M. Dutens, the travelling companion of Lord Beverley. It is of gold, plain, and somewhat roughly hammered into shape, and set with a small sard intaglio of a Victory walking, engraved in the rude style of consular medallie art.

† Some that have been crushed explain the mode of construction, how head and shank were skilfully beaten out of one ingot, and the two ends of the shank welded together by the same tool.

‡ The most remarkable modern instance of similar refuge from persecuting Fate is that of Condorcet, who, proscribed by the Convention, and arrested, swallowed the dose

and another less trite anecdote, that of the custodian of the Capitol, quoted by Pliny, who being apprehended on account of the gold deposited there by Camillus, "under Jove's throne," which Crassus had carried off, "broke the gem of his ring in his mouth and expired immediately;" having, as it would seem, resorted to this last expedient in order to escape the torture on account of his suspected connivance at the sacrilege. In the (late) Praun Collection I observed an onyx intaglio, a satyr's mask, whereof the back was hollowed into the shape of a bowl, with the usual raised circle, or *umbril*, inside the bottom. There is very good reason therefore to suspect that it was designed to contain a dose of poison, the stone being worked out so thin as easily to be crushed by a sharp bite. The ancients were acquainted with vegetable poisons as speedy in their effect as our strychnine, as appears from the death of Claudius, brought about by merely tickling the throat with a poisoned feather; that of his son, Britannicus, instantaneous from a potion prepared by Locuste,\* and innumerable other instances. It had been foretold to Heliogabalus that he should die a violent death: he therefore prepared against such an emergency, besides halters twined of purple silk, poisons enclosed within rubies, sapphires, and emeralds (set in his rings therefore), to give him a choice of deaths. And studying extravagance to the last, another device for his contemplated suicide was a pavement of gold and precious stones, at the foot of a lofty tower, upon which he intended to cast himself headlong, when it came to the pinch. But the soldiers surprised him before he could make his selection amidst this "embarras de richesses," and after dragging him with a hook all over Rome, threw his corpse into the Tiber.

Isidorus of Seville explains the old Latin name for a ring, viz.,

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he carried in readiness for such an emergency inclosed within his ring, and was found dead next morning in his cell. The poison was a concentrated mixture of stramonium and opium, prepared by Cabanis, and produced death by apoplexy, without spasm or pain.

\* And most conclusive case of all, that of the Roman knight, given by Pliny, who got rid of two wives by the same playful method as the unlucky Quaker, Tawell, used with his burdensome mistress ('*Aconitum*,' xxvii. 2).



*Ungulus*, as a comparison, "because the gem covers the top of the ring in the same manner as the nail (*unguis*) does the finger-end." But this is a mere fanciful etymology, perhaps the learned prelate's own coining, for *Ungulus* is clearly nothing more than the literal translation of the Greek *ὀνύχιον*, the favourite ring-stone with the Greco-Italians, from whom the Romans first obtained engraved gems for mounting in rings. For in early times, when they did not employ the scarabei of their Etruscan instructors (from whom, says Florus, they borrowed the ring), their signets were cut in the metal itself, of which more notice shall be taken in the following page.

Under Claudius it became, says Pliny, the fashion to engrave the signet in the gold of the ring itself, now made massy and solid.\* At first such rings bore the emperor's portrait, and were restricted to such persons as had the *entrée* at court, and hence this invidious privilege became a perpetual source of accusations of high treason,† until Vespasian abolished the cause by allowing all persons alike free access to the emperor. A fine example of such a ring, bearing the confronted busts of M. Aurelius and L. Verus, is preserved in the Uffizi jewel chamber, Florence. This was but the revival of the ancient practice, for Macrobius (vii. 13) quotes Ateius Capito to the effect that the devices were at first always graven in the substance of the ring itself, whether that were in gold or in iron; and that it was only the progress of luxury introduced engraving in precious stones for the sake of augmenting the value of the ornament. Such in fact seems to have been the fashion in the days of Euripides, when the use of finger rings began to obtain in Greece, for he makes Theseus say ('Hippolytus'), on receiving Phædra's letter, "The impress of the gold-wrought signet smiles upon me;" whence we may infer the poet

\* I am inclined, however, to think that Pliny's words (xxx. 12) "*imaginem principis ex auro in annulo*," means more than this—a bust of the prince in solid gold "*ex auro*," not "*inseulptum*:" of which we have numerous examples remaining in the busts of Serapis and of Isis, of the sort alluded to in the sentence immediately before. The context shows he was thinking of something novel in the object presented in the ring,—an intaglio cut in the gold was by no means a new thing.

† Against such as presumed to enter without this necessary passport.

meant it to offer the portrait of the fair suicide. But the most elegant example in this style, and one, too, coeval with the earliest times of Rome, is that in the Bale Collection, in which two lions disposed in the favourite Etruscan fashion support a cartouche engraved with the Alban Sow and her litter, the whole chiselled out of the solid gold with wonderful skill. As this jewel was discovered in a *tomb* at Veii, its date must necessarily precede the downfall of that ancient city, which took place in the year of Rome 359, or about four centuries before our era. Other examples of less importance, but unmistakably, from their style, long antecedent to the age of Claudius, have come under my observation, more especially one with a broad beasil\* engraved with a magnificent head of a nymph, in the highest perfection of Sicilian art. But Castellani of Naples informs me that the latter, and others of the same class (which now frequently come into the market), however exquisite the engraving which gives them such apparent authenticity, are indeed, so far as the rings themselves are concerned, antique, being often discovered in Campanian tombs, but that their *faces* are always *plain* and polished (could they have been finger-mirrors, an ornament still worn by the Hindoo beauties?), but which are subsequently engraved with these fine heads, copied from the Sicilian medals by a clever Neapolitan forger.†

\* Amongst the antique jewels of the British Museum are several of this kind, all identical in pattern, though widely differing in weight. They are of special interest, as belonging to old collections, the Hamilton, &c., made before the Neapolitan forgers had turned their mischievous ingenuity towards this class. One of the most charming has the engraving of a winged Venus, *Turan*, seated, and holding forth the love-inspiring bird, *ignis*, a subject plainly telling its destination. But the most important of all came with the Castellani Collection, and bears an Isis-head in the grandest Greek manner, unmistakably the portrait of some Ptolemaic queen, *conjugated* with Serapis, and certainly the royal signet. Gold was the material of the signets of the Pharaohs: their Macedonian successors adhered to the practice, as to all the others of their predecessors.

† Upon a very remarkable sarcophagus, adorned with a spirited relief of the death-duel of the Theban Brothers, the lady who reclines above has two such rings, one on the thumb, the other on the ring-finger of the same hand. This monument retains in perfection its original painting and gilding (Inghirami 'Mon. Etrus. Carredo'). On the contrary, the Etruscan noble always appears in his monumental effigy with a single large ring set with a long oval *gem* upon his ring-finger. It is unaccountable why, in



In Pliny's day it was most fashionable to wear but one ring, and that on the little finger, as we have seen recommended by the erudite Alexandrian father, although previously the signet had always been worn on the "ring-finger" (the fourth) of the left hand, from a notion that a vein passed down it direct from the heart. This discovery is assigned by A. Gellius (x. 10) to the Egyptian anatomists. Even now this finger preserves its ancient title, and retains the privilege of bearing the ring in the sole capacity of importance that the change of manners has left to the golden circlet.

At the late (though uncertain) period of the Empire when Macrobius composed his most interesting 'Table-talk,' this had once more resumed its office of carrying the signet-ring; for the assembled guests at his Saturnalia (vii. 13) express their surprise at seeing Avienus wear it upon the little finger of his right hand, for which he excuses himself by the plea of his proper ring-finger being swollen from some injury.

Pliny thus traces the changes of fashion in this particular:—"At first it was the custom to wear but one ring on each finger next to the little finger of both hands, as we see in the statues of Numa and Servius Tullius (the only Roman kings represented wearing rings). Next they put them on the forefinger, even in the statues of the gods.\* Last of all they thought proper to confer this honour on the little finger also. The natives of Gaul and Britain are said to have worn them on the middle finger. *This* nowadays is the only one exempted, all the rest are loaded, and even each joint respectively with others of smaller size. Some pile three at once upon the little finger, whilst others wear on this but a single one wherewith to seal up their other seal-rings. *This* is treasured up, and like some precious relic, unworthily profaned, is drawn forth from its sanctuary when required for

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the hundreds of such figures extant, not one should have been discovered wearing the scarabeus in a ring. It may be concluded from this fact that the beetle form had gone out of fashion before the time when these small stone sarcophagi came into use.

\* I have seen a bronze signet-ring so gigantic as unmistakably to have been made for the hand of some perished Colossus. In the statues of emperors the ring is always engraved with the figure of a *lituus*, to indicate the highest quality of the imperial rank, that of Pontifex Maximus.

use, and to wear but one on the little finger is but a way of boasting of the more precious collection locked up at home."

In Horace's days, to sport three rings at once on the left hand, "*cum tribus annellis*," was the mark of the finished exquisite, but the next fifty years of peace and luxury had largely multiplied the number demanded for the complete outfit of the man of fashion. Martial (xi. 59) humorously accounts for a certain fop's constantly appearing with half-a-dozen rings on each finger, by the excuse that he did not possess a ring-case to keep them in:—

"Senos Charinus omnibus digitis gerit  
Nec nocte ponit annulos,  
Nec cum lavatur. Causa quæ sit queritis?  
Dactylithecam non habet."

Such heaps of rings worn at once were, it would seem, merely ornamental, and not signets, to judge from Martial's compliment to his patron, the Consul Stella (v. 11):—

"Sardonychæ, amargdos, adamantas, iaspidas, uno  
Versat in articulo Stella, Severe, mea;  
Multas in digito plures in carmine gemmas  
Invenies; hinc est hæc, puto, culta manus."

"Sardonyx, emeralds, jaspers, diamonds, all  
My Stella sports upon one joint so small;  
Bright gems his finger, yet more deck his lines;  
'Tis from the last his hand embellished shines."

And in the next epigram, to give a notion of the value of this display, he merrily avers—

"Uno cum digito vel hoc vel illo  
Portet Stella meus decem puellas"—

implying that each gem was equivalent to a bride's dowry.\* In

\* Or more likely, considering Stella's reputation as a lady killer (for which see Statius in his epithalamium), each was the price of a lady's favours. Martial laughs at the knight who presented so many rings to his mistresses, that at last he had none for himself, that is, lost the property qualification for his rank:—

"Dum donas Macer annulos puellis,  
Desisti Macer annulos habere."

Where the name also conveys a joke at the lover's leanness.



wearing rings on the top joints is what Clemens has censured in the above-quoted passage, and yet in spite of its inconvenience it continued in use to the very close of the empire; for Ammian, writing under Honorius, speaks of the Roman nobles, on leaving the bath, receiving from an attendant their rings, which they took off on entering lest they should be damaged by the hot water; and then strutting off "*digitis sicut metatis*," with their fingers *measured off*, as it were, by the rings placed on each separate joint.\* Such a fashion also survived throughout the Middle Ages, at least for ladies, as existing portraits attest; for example, the well-known picture of the Countess of Richmond, Henry the VII.'s mother.

The minute size of many antique gold rings has often puzzled antiquaries, from their ignorance of the existence of this curious practice; some, like Caylus, having supposed them made only to be placed on the fingers of small statues, like the household gods; others, again, that they were children's rings. They were, however, intended for the smaller joints. It is true, indeed, that children from a very early age wore rings suited to their tiny fingers, for Statius, describing the way in which Melior petted his favourite Glaucias (who died before completing his eleventh year), adds how he delighted

"*Vivis digitos incendere gemis.*"

"With living gems to make his fingers blaze."

Again, although these very minute specimens were made for the smaller joints, and the mode of wearing them is well shown in a hand figured by Winckelmann (H. A. Pl. 18, 9), yet, as a general rule, all antique rings are of *comparatively small* circumference. This confirms what also may be deduced from the examination of the helmets and sword-hilts that have come down to us from the heroic ages, the fact that the primitive Greeks and Italians were of very small stature. As a curious illustration, it may be stated here that Apollodorus gives the

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\* In the Alicante dedication of jewels to Isis, Avita has "two rings with diamonds on the little finger, a cluster ring (*polypsophos*) on the next, also one set with an emerald on the *top-joint* of the same. (Montfaucon, Pl. 136.)

height of the *gigantic* Hercules at no more than four cubits, or six feet; and Athenæus describes a man of the same height, which must therefore have been considered something extraordinary, as personating the *Year* (the Egyptian genius 'Eniavtòs) in the Bacchic procession celebrated with such magnificence by Ptolemy Philadelphus. This man wore a long tragedian's robe, and bore a cornucopia; he was followed by a woman nearly as tall, representing the festival *Penteris*, attended by the Four Seasons (Ath. v. 27).<sup>\*</sup> The same conclusion as to the diminutive size of the Romans themselves, forces itself upon us on reading of their surprise at the enormous stature of the Gauls and Germans; races, as the Frankish sepulchres still attest, seldom exceeding the present ordinary measurement of man.

Taste had so far declined, even at the early period when Pliny flourished, that "some people made a boast of the weight of their rings;" to which assertion full testimony is borne by one found in Hungary, and now in the Waterton Dactylitheca. Though only of a measure fitting the little finger, it weighs 2 oz. 2 dwts.; the shank, triangular in section, increases rapidly in width towards the head, which forms a long pointed oval, representing in shape an *eye*. In the centre is set a fine and large eye-onyx, but not engraved, evidently doing duty there as a mere precious stone. The entire thing vividly represents to the reader of Lucian Parmeno's ring just cited, where the consideration of intrinsic value in the ornament had totally banished all regard for art. Inasmuch as the whole appearance of this jewel was most clearly intended to represent an eye, it may have

\* Similarly the woman, Phya, who personated Pallas in the introduction of Pisis-tratus into the Acropolis, is mentioned as a prodigy on account of her stature, though that did not exceed four cubits less by three fingers (two inches), which is no more than five feet ten inches. More conclusive than any is Strabo's remark that he had seen Britons at Rome (in the reign of Augustus) who, though scarce arrived at puberty, were half a foot taller than the tallest Italians. They were, however, ill-shaped and knock-kneed. Now our barrows never yield any gigantic skeletons of the aborigines: on the contrary, the remains are usually *under* the average height of the present day.



been worn as a charm against the Evil Eye, for which object a similar figure was often engraved in the gem itself. Or it may have been an *ex voto* dedicated to Osiris, the "god of many eyes," as his name imports. Tcherkow takes for *votive*, the two huge rings, far exceeding this in dimensions, and both set with heads of Pallas in high relief in dark jacinth, found in a tomb opened by him near Kertch, and afterwards deposited in the Museum of that town.\*

The treasure found at Tarsus (1863) comprised four equally remarkable specimens of these cumbrous jewels. One, set with a plain nicolo, had the shank fluted and pierced, weighing 2 oz.; the second, of the same form, but with shank quite plain, carried a nicolo engraved with a spread eagle, and the monogram TAP; weight, 1½ oz.; the third, exactly similar in make, had engraved in its metal a Roma Nicephoros, with the owner's name, ΓΕΡΟΝΤΙΟΥΤ; weight, 2 oz.; the fourth, with six fluted sides, bore on its face the busts of Sol and Serapis in relief; weight, 2¾ oz. The latest coins in the deposit were of Gordian, which gives the approximate date of these rings. ('Revue Num.' 1868.)

That, however, these monstrous rings were actually worn, and even to a more extravagant degree, appears from Martial (xi. 47), where he ridicules the upstart who gloried in one a full pound in weight:—

"Zoisle quid tota gemmam precingere libra  
Te juvat et miseram perdere sardonychem?  
Annulus iste tuis fuerit modo cruribus aptus,  
Non eadem digitis pondera convenient."

"In a whole pound of gold the gem why fix,  
And bury thus the unlucky sardonix?  
Though such a ring beset your shanks of late,  
One's fingers sure require a different weight."

As may be well supposed, their heaviness made them inconvenient appendages, continually slipping off the fingers, especially when

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\* Since removed to the Hermitage, St. Petersburg. Vide 'Bulletino del Inst. Arch. Rom.' for 1840, where accurate drawings are given of the whole find.

greasy, at meals (forks not being invented); hence a ring-case, *dactyliotheca*, recommends its services in the distich (Mart. xiv. 123):—

“Sæpe gravis digitis elabitur annulus unctis  
Tuta mea fiet sed tua gemma fide.”

Another (also Waterton), weighing 15 dwts., is set with a sardonix and engraved with a dancing girl; a similar one I have seen with the figure of a dove on the same species of stone, both subjects illustrating the precepts of Clemens as to what ought *not*, and what *ought*, to be adopted by his flock for a signet-device.

Such massy rings, apparently of defined and regulated weight, were under the Empire badges of military rank. That the rank of *tribunus militum*, answering to our colonel, was conferred by the grant of a ring from the *imperator*, appears from Juvenal's “*semestri vatum digitos circumligat auro;*” for the abuse of making “paper colonels” out of civilians, as a mode of pensioning them, was then in full blow. Such a badge is specified amongst the various insignia and allowances, some curious enough,\* ordered by the Emperor Valerian to be made to Claudius Gothicus on his appointment as tribune to the Fifth Legion (Treb. Pollio. ‘Valerian’): viz., “Two brooches in silver-gilt, one brooch in gold with a copper pin, one *double-gemmed* ring of one ounce in weight, one bracelet of seven ounces, one neck-collar of a pound.” The term “*bigemmus annulus*” is very difficult to understand, no *massy*† antique rings occurring set with two gems, although they do with three, one large in the centre, two smaller on the shoulders. The only explanation that suggests itself to me of the term is supplied by an example figured by Chifflet in his ‘*Apistopistus*’ of a massy ring, the signet of which, engraved on both sides, and therefore not im-

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\* As “*duas eximias mulieres ex captivis.*” A remarkably fine Roman ring, though simple enough in pattern, is in the Beverley Collection, found towards the end of the last century at Maldon. The gem, a *nicolo*, bears a sheep feeding, the hereditary device of the family *Rustia*, of whom some member must have brought the ring to this country, probably in the Claudian invasion.

† A small lady's ring of two hoops placed side by side, and set with *two* emeralds, has been found at Pompeii.



properly to be described as *bigenneus*,\* revolved on an axis within the surrounding collet—a pattern much followed in the Cinque-cento. This signet bore on the one side Hadrian's portrait, and consequently may be supposed an official one. That assigned by Gorlæus to Nero's own proprietorship, is of similar construction. The same kind of ring seems to be mentioned in the epitaph of C. Aur. Flavianus, given by Pitiscus: "*Torque aurea et annulo duplici ob virtutem donatus.*" Perhaps, after all, the *duplex* here may only signify that the ring, being given as a reward of merit, was of *double* the regular weight (which, from the anecdote above quoted concerning Piso and his ring, appears to have been half an ounce), and have no reference whatever to its *form*. Nothing indeed is extant to which the term *duplex* in its latter sense can be applied, and of a class necessarily so numerous from its employment in the army, some examples would certainly have come down to us, easily recognisable by so exceptional a pattern.

To give now a few examples of "*annuli unciarii*," all indicated by their character as belonging to the military class. One weighing an ounce, set with a nicolo engraved with the head of Augustus in a good style, was found near Bristol in the spring of 1836. Caylus (Rec. V. Pl. exii.) figures another carved into an extremely elegant pattern, also set with a nicolo bearing only the initials Q. R. H. Now comes in a new and highly interesting class, of which Caylus gives, on the same plate, a beautiful specimen, a massy ring having its spreading shoulders pierced with a tasteful design of open work, but which holds instead of a gem an aureus of Maximin the Thracian. Another, somewhat similar in make, but surpassing almost anything of the sort in gracefulness of outline, the shoulders being cut into *volute*s, is similarly mounted with an aureus of his murdered patron Sev. Alexander, having for reverse *LIBERALITAS*.† A third, equally heavy (one ounce seems the *regulation* standard for them all), but far ruder in shape and workmanship, has for

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\* This explanation seems to be supported by the expression of Avitus, "*sigilli duplicis formæ*," for a swivel ring, which will be considered under "Iron Rings."

† Figured in the 'Archæological Journal,' iv. 315.

gem an aureus of Diocletian, rev. VIRTUS MILITVM: it is now in the Braybrooke collection. As the coin of Maximin has for reverse VICTORIA GERMANICA, it will be observed that types relating to the successes of the army have been selected in every instance, a proof positive they were military decorations; whilst the remarkable correspondence in the weight of all belongs rather to a prize instituted by government than to an ornament made after the fancy or the means of the proprietor. These rings betray to us in a most speaking manner the utter decay of gem-engraving in the reigns to which they belong, the extreme scarcity of whose *authentic* portraits on gems tells again the same melancholy tale. The beauty of the workmanship of these rings attests that they proceeded from the best jewellers of the times, yet they were unable to obtain an *intaglio* of sufficient merit to enrich them with their patron's likeness, but were forced to adopt the mean expedient of setting in them a piece of current coin. And this had come to pass in the brief interval since the reign of Severus, of whose family decent gem-portraits abundantly remain.\*

The shape of all these weighty rings shows at once for what finger they were intended, being nearly triangular, the gem forming the *base* to the pyramid, a disposition of weight owing to which they, notwithstanding their massiveness, sit comfortably enough upon the little finger, and prove much less inconvenient in wear than one would have expected from their bulky proportions. This triangular form, not indeed exactly regular, the base being somewhat curved outwards, is generally affected more or less in the make of all the rings of the Lower Empire.

Many belonging to this period, designed for presents and keepsakes, have their object specified by the inscription covering the shank. The most elegant example of the style known to me is one found at Corbridge, and figured in the 'Archæological Journal' (vii. p. 191). It

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\* The treasure-trove of Rouen (1865), now in the Musée du Louvre, contains a ring set with a gold quinarius of Sev. Alexander, and several others set with quinarii of his successor, Maximin. The form of all these rings is six-sided—a fashion very prevalent at that period.



is of fine gold, weighing 75 grains; the hoop, of equal width all round, forms a series of scallops, in each of which is pierced *à jour* one of the letters, with a flower at intervals, making up the address to the fair recipient, *AEMILIA ZESES*, "Long life to thee, Emilia." *ZESES* (ζῆσσις) is a good wish perpetually occurring in Christian mementoes; and this pierced work in jewellery seems to have become fashionable amongst the Romans by the middle of the third century. Pliny notices its first introduction, for the ornamentation of *silver plate*, in his own times, and gives the technical name for it, "*interrasile opus*."

Before quitting the subject of rings formed entirely of gold, some early Greek examples demand notice for their elegance as well as singularity. Their heads are shaped into a *vesica piscis* (that favourite Hindoo figure), and support devices exquisitely carved in relief out of the solid metal. One (Brit. Mus.) represents a Faun with a Nymph on his knee, in the same archaic style as the similar type on the Lete Lesbos coin; another, equally primitive, Apollo holding out a patera; a third, somewhat later, with a circular head, bears a magnificent Medusa in full face, and half-relief. Of Roman times are some others; one with a profile head of Serapis in a noble style, the other with the full-face of Hercules very much raised. It must be observed here that these Grecian chased rings differ entirely in pattern, execution, and devices, from the Etruscan graffiti and reliefs already described in their proper place.

Pliny has been already quoted that the Gauls and Britons were the only nations wearing their rings upon the *middle* finger, which seems to have struck that curious observer as a truly outlandish fashion. What these rings were it is hard to say, certainly they were not *signets*, useless to tribes ignorant of writing; and of which, besides, examples, had they ever existed, would still be extant, and immediately recognisable by the Celtic character of their devices, so singular and so unmistakable\* wheresoever it presents itself. Again, that they were *not*

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\* A specimen of the first attempts of a native artist in gem-engraving, probably done soon after the Roman conquest, was a convex pale amethyst bearing a wild boar,

signets, may be deduced from the expression used by Diodorus Siculus, enumerating amongst the massy gold ornaments of the independent Gauls, *δακτυλίους ἀξιολόγους*, "rings of a remarkable kind," the term used properly signifying merely ornamental rings, and not signets, *σφρηγίδες*. These *δακτύλιοι* could have been no other than the smaller pieces of the so-called ring money, penannular hoops often of great weight, and precisely similar to those worn on the fingers of the Joliba negroes in our times, amongst whom they also constitute the sole currency. So strange a fashion might well excite the attention of the inquisitive Sicilian.\* Nothing, as might have been expected, of the nature of an *intaglio* ring can be assigned to either nation before their reduction by the Romans, although numerous relics attest their proficiency in working the gold, then so abundantly supplied by their rivers, into varied and tasteful ornaments. Diodorus speaks with astonishment of the immense yield of the Gallic gold-washings, and his account of their productiveness is strongly illustrated by the fact recorded by Suetonius, that the influx of gold resulting from Caesar's subjugation of that country caused its value at Rome to fall by nearly one-third. It was at once reduced from 5760 n.s. to 3000 n.s. (750 denarii) the pound of twelve ounces, not Troy weight but avoirdupois, the metrical system still maintained without variation in the Eternal City. The Gallic gold, however, was of very low standard, the autonomous *aurei*, mere caricatures of Philip's staters, which still exist in large numbers, being evidently coined out of the ore just as it came from the washings, without any attempt to refine it from its native alloy of copper as well as silver. This ancient currency must have circulated in the country down to the very close of the Western Empire, for in no other way is it possible to understand the edict of Majorian

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done in the peculiar style in which that so frequent type is seen on their national coinage. In the Praun Collection was a bull in calcedony, inscribed *DNVAVOC*: both name and type are unmistakably Gallic. The bull is the reverse of the autonomous coins of Tornacum, legend, *DNVAVOC*. Caylus figures for Gallic a massy bronze ring, supporting the recumbent figure of a ram, in a most barbarous style, well supporting his attribution.

\* Magnitude and weight supply the reason for their being worn on the middle finger.



ordering the *publicani* to refuse no *solidus* of full weight, "except the Gallic one, that is rated lower on account of the quality of the gold." The more primitive ring-money was, as already remarked, worn on the fingers, whilst the larger sort, with cup-shaped ends, fastened round the throat the ample and heavy *sagum*, mantle, each disk being passed through a button-hole, exactly like a modern pair of studs.

The series of Roman gold rings terminates in a conclusion not unlike that of the Empire itself, for it ends with those grotesque exemplifications of truly barbarian taste and poverty called *Merovingian* and *Frankish*. The miserable Teutonic savages, at whose touch the vast and accumulated wealth of ages vanished instantaneously in dust and ashes, after they became masters of Gaul, previously the richest province of the empire ("Gallia *dives*" is the epithet given by Manilius), used to adorn their fingers with what may rather be called monstrous *fabrics* than *pieces* of jewellery. Their rings are made out of a thin leaf of gold filled up with mastic, and often rudely decorated on the back with monkish devices in repoussé work. The heads, of most unwieldy dilatation, often contain a carbuncle, more rarely an antique intaglio, surrounded by many flat folds of wire twisted into a cable and forming a border to the gem. In others, the head rudely imitates a tower, the sides pierced into open arcades, that grand feature in all Teutonic work. The faces are set with unshapen precious stones, usually several together, sometimes sapphires, but more frequently carbuncles. The distinctive characteristic of the class is this box-like, ungainly formation of the head, and the equally artless adaptation of the shank, a thick round wire, for the most part plated on copper, and carelessly soldered on to the head, with two gold grains attached on each side of the points of junction. In the whole proceeding the object has most palpably been to make the greatest display out of the least possible quantity of the precious metal.





## IRON RINGS.

It is time now to treat of rings in iron, with which perhaps this dissertation ought to have opened, for if we believe the earliest tradition, this metal first served for such a decoration of the hand. Jupiter being at length moved to release Prometheus from the chains in which he had sworn to keep him eternally, in order to save his conscience by keeping the letter of his oath, obliged the loosened prisoner ever to wear on his finger a ring forged out of a link of his former fetters and set with a fragment of the rock whereto he had been so long chained.\* Hence Catullus describes the Titan amongst the other guests at the marriage of Peleus with Thetis, as :—

*“extenuata gerens veteris vestigia culpae.”*

“Came sage Prometheus, on his hand he wore  
The slender symbol of his doom of yore,  
When fettered fast in adamantine chain,  
Hung from the craggy steep, he groaned in endless pain.”

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\* Licetus boldly begins at the beginning, and ascribes the invention of this ornament to Tubal-Cain himself. As he was the first worker in metals, the very first thing, exclaims the enthusiastic antiquary, that he would essay his new art upon, *must* have been a ring for his finger! But a better acquaintance with the memorials of primeval man certifies that the first piece of wrought metal took the form of a dagger, a defence against enemies human or bestial.



Such, too, was the common wear of Romans of all degrees during the republican times, the simplicity of the martial metal well beseeing the progeny of the god of war. When Marius rode through Rome in the triumphal car, both the victor and the slave standing behind him, to teach humility, had alike rings of iron on their fingers, and the old custom stood its ground even beyond the extinction of the Commonwealth.

This fact explains the occurrence of so many fine intagli bearing traces of having been originally set in iron rings, although the rings themselves have necessarily been long ago reduced to mere shapeless masses of rust. In many cases this oxide, from its affinity to the colouring matter of the sard, has been imbibed by the latter, imparting to the stone a most singular black tint. A few iron rings, however, having chanced to lie in a drier soil, have come down to us intact. In some of these the gem has first been encased in a stout gold collet, in others it is fixed in the simple iron, and *à jour*, or to use the English term, "set open," that is, without a back. In others again the gem was backed with a leaf of gold, and so dropped into a bed cut for it in the solid iron, a precaution taken to prevent the lucid colour from being obscured by the rusting of its receptacle. A good example of the unfrequent mode of mounting an intaglio *à jour*, is a ring of a slight and elegant form, its intaglio a fine carbuncle engraved with the Canopus vase between two serpents, now in my collection. One of the finest Roman portraits known to me retained its original setting in the same fashion: the head resembled much the reputed likeness of Masinissa, and certainly the excellence of the engraving stamped it for the signet of a personage of the highest rank in his own times. (Now in Baron Roger's cabinet.)

From the crystallisation of the metal in some of these relics, very conspicuous after they have been repolished, mineralogists have concluded them fashioned out of *meteoric* iron. Doubtless a ring forged out of a fragment of a stone "that fell down from heaven" would have been deemed replete with wondrous virtues, and infinitely more precious than of refined gold.

In the times of the Republic, iron rings, says Pliny, were worn as a badge of martial courage, "*ut virtutis bellicæ insigne.*" After stating (xxxiii. 4) that the wearing of gold rings was introduced into Italy from Greece, he expresses his surprise that the statue of Tarquinius Priscus was destitute of this ornament, seeing that his father, Demaratus, was a Corinthian by birth. But it must be remembered that if the tradition be true that Demaratus was banished from Corinth by the usurper Cypselus, B.C. 660, there is good reason to suppose that the wearing of rings on the fingers was as yet unknown in that city. Lessing goes so far as to assert that the fashion did not exist in Greece before the times of the Peloponnesian War (B.C. 431-404), and it is indeed probable that up to that period the signet was merely the gem itself, worn suspended by a string. Signets of crystal\* (or glass), attached to gold chains, are enumerated amongst the donations to the Parthenon, in an inscription dating from the same times. Plato's story about the ring of Gyges, which rendered the wearer invisible when the bizzel, σφενδόνη,† was turned inside, only shows that the present form was the general one in his day also, to the usages of which he necessarily suited the particulars of his tale.

Under the early Republic the senators alone had the privilege of wearing gold rings, which Pliny deduces from the tradition that they *laid aside their rings* in order to mark their sense of what they looked upon as a national calamity, viz., the publication of the Dies Fasti, or the days on which assemblies could legally be held, by Cn. Flavius, secretary to Appius Claudius Cæcus, and his election as tribune by the grateful plebeians, an event which took place B.C. 303. On the same occasion the knights put away their silver *phaleræ*, or embossed decorations worn over the breastplate, the original badge of their rank, for the gold ring did not become their distinctive mark

\* "The onyx engraved with an antelope" in this list could have been no other than a Persian Cone, as its weight of 32 drs. (4oz.) conclusively shows.

† By an apt metaphor the Latins similarly called *funda* the part holding the stone, from its resemblance in shape to a sling, which likewise holds a stone, though of a different sort. Our bizzel, beasil, &c., is a corruption of the German *bissel*, a "mouthful," because like a mouth the open setting bites and holds the gem.



before the reign of Tiberius, Pliny noticing that so late as under Augustus, the majority of them kept to their ancient rings of iron.

For many ages, however, not even the senators wore gold rings in private life: they were issued from the treasury to such as were sent on embassies to foreign princes, to invest them with greater respectability, nor were any allowed to wear them besides those thus commissioned by the state. Even these privileged few only put them on when acting in public capacities; when at home they continued to wear their ancient iron signet-rings. Nay, more, when they triumphed they were not permitted to assume this, it would seem, exclusive privilege of an ex-ambassador, but like Marius, above-mentioned, bore on the finger the simple iron circle, like the attendant slave. This tyrant, all-powerful as he was, never possessed a gold ring at all before his third consulship, having, it would appear, acquired the right by serving as ambassador in the interim.

As a relic of ancient usage the bride's betrothal ring\* continued in Pliny's time to be made of iron, and not set with a gem. One of these has come under my notice: it was made in the form of two hands clasped, and the whole strongly plated with gold. It had recently been turned up in some diggings at Rome, and was unquestionably authentic. This old Roman fashion was revived in Germany in modern times. The women of Prussia in the war of liberation, 1813, in lack of other coin, contributed their wedding rings to the patriotic fund, receiving in exchange from the government others of iron, with the commemorative legend, "Ich gabe gold für Eisen." These are now preserved in their families as very precious heirlooms.

The present Italian name for the wedding ring is *Fede*, "faith" or "troth." It probably bore the same name in the Latin of the

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\* The Egyptian gold, before the introduction of coinage, had usually circulated in the form of a *ring*, and the Egyptian at his marriage placed one of these pieces of gold on his wife's finger, in token of his entrusting her with all his property. The early Christians, says Clemens, saw no harm in following this custom, and in our own marriage ceremony the man places the same plain gold ring on his bride's finger when he says, "With all my worldly goods I thee endow." (Sharpe's 'Egyptian Mythology,' p. x.)

Lower Empire, the symbol usurping the title of the idea it signified; for Prudentius has, in his 'Martyrs of Calagurris':—

"*Illius fidem figurans nube fertur annulus.*"

"Image of his *faith* unshaken, through the clouds is borne his ring."

The early establishment of this symbol of plighted troth in the Grecian marriage ceremony is curiously illustrated by that amongst the 'Golden Maxims' of Pythagoras: "Never wear too tight a ring;" which was interpreted as a caution against entering into the state of matrimony.

According to the new regulations,\* of the law passed under Tiberius, no one was allowed to wear a gold ring unless both himself, father, and grandfather were free-born, his property assessed at four hundred sester tia (4000*L.*), and himself possessing the right of sitting in the fourteen rows in the theatre allotted to the equestrian order by the Julian Law. (Plin. xxxiii. 8.) Before this law was enacted, any one it would seem might wear a gold ring at his pleasure, and Pliny takes the story of the three bushels of rings collected from the slain at the battle of Cannæ as a proof how universal the fashion had become by that time. But with all respect to Pliny's judgment, the story does not warrant his deduction, which is so entirely at variance with all the rest of the facts he has been adducing to exhibit the frugality of the Republican ages in that particular down to the very latest. The three bushels of rings may indeed have been collected, but not in *gold*. The quantity first becomes credible when understood to be made up of the *iron* rings worn probably by every one who fell in that battle, from the private to the general.† Pliny's view of the matter was

\* Such interference had become necessary, for C. Sulp. Galba had complained that the very tavern-keepers were presuming to usurp the ornament.

† To give Livy's account of the incident (xxxiii. 12). After relating the words in which Mago, Hannibal's brother, announced the victory to the Carthaginian senate, he goes on: "In confirmation of such joyful intelligence, he ordered a bag of gold rings to be emptied on the floor of the vestibule of the senate-house, which made such a heap, as when measured to fill three and a half *modii* (*pecks*, not *bushels*), according to some authors. A report, more near the truth, has kept its ground, that they did not exceed *one modius* full. He thereupon added, in proof of the extent of the slaughter, that none but knights, and of these only the principal men, used to wear this distinction."



biased by the extravagance in that luxury which surrounded him, though but the growth of his own century.

Yet even under Augustus, a few senators (staunch Conservatives evidently) continued faithful to the old republican ring of iron, such as Calpurnius, and Manilius who had been *legate* to Marius in the Jugurthine War, and also L. Fufidius. In the family of the Quinctii, not even the ladies were allowed to wear any ornaments of gold. The Lacedæmonians in Pliny's age adhered to the law of Lycurgus, and wore nothing but iron-signets; a rule they observed to a much later period, for Phlegon writing in the middle of the next century in that most ghastly of ghost stories\* with which his book 'On Wonderful Things' opens, speaks of the iron ring of Machatas exchanged for the gold one with which Philinnion his spectre-bride had been buried.†

The metal continued in use for this purpose even beyond the date of the fall of the Roman Empire, especially amongst such as affected a primitive simplicity of manners. Thus we find in the sixth century Avitus, bishop of Vienne, requesting Apollinaris, bishop of Valence, to get him one so made: "*Ut annulo ferreo et admodum tenui velut concurrentibus in se delphinulis concludendo sigilli duplicis forma geminis cardinibus inseratur.*" A curious allusion this to a swivel signet, apparently to be cut in the same metal, otherwise he would have specified the gem he required. Avitus goes on to direct that it be engraved with the monogram of his own name. As he says nothing about the engraving on the other side of the revolving seal, we may

\* The original of Goethe's '*Braut von Corinth*,' but far superior to it in dramatic effect, for he has mediævalised, and thereby spoilt the tale. The wording of the original shows it to have been a report from the governor of the province to the emperor; the account may therefore be received as one of the best authenticated amongst all revelations of the spiritual world.

† This shows, what frequent discoveries still confirm, that women continued to be laid in the tomb with their favourite ring on the finger, in the same way as when they were committed to the funeral pyre. Propertius remarks on the sight of Cynthia's ghost—

"*Et solitam digito beryllon adederat ignis.*"

When the corpse of Julius Cæsar was tumultuously burnt by the excited populace, the soldiers flung their arms, the women their own ornaments and the bulks of their children, into the fire, to do honour to the extemporised obsequies.

conclude it was something that went there as a matter of course; perhaps the title of his diocese, a cross, or other emblem too well known to require to be particularised in his directions to the maker.

Nevertheless, it is perfectly clear that even before the age of the Antonines iron rings had been degraded into a badge of servitude, at least amongst the Romans, for Apuleius mentioning a money-bag sealed up by a slave, has occasion to allude to the signet in *iron* which he, "as being a slave," was then wearing on his finger when charged with the fraud. Isidorus also (l. c.) affirms that the free-born only could wear gold, freed-men silver, and slaves iron—seemingly alluding to the regulation in force during the times of the Lower Empire. Thus the millionaire Trimalchio, an emancipated slave, though he proves to his admiring guests, by weighing them in their sight, that the gold ornaments upon his wife Fortunata amounted altogether to six pounds and a half—a tolerable load for a lady—yet durst not himself (this was in Nero's time) wear a solid gold ring, "but displayed on his little finger a large one, gilt, and on the top joint of the next another of gold studded with stars of iron." But the entire passage from Trimalchio's Feast deserves to be transcribed in full, as curiously illustrating the massy jewellery of the ladies of the times.

"'But tell me pray, Caius, why does not Fortunata come to dinner?' 'Why,' replied Trimalchio, 'you know what sort of a woman she is; until she has seen that the plate is all right, and divided the broken meat amongst the younger fry, she will not put a morsel in her mouth.' 'That may be so,' said Habinna, 'but unless she comes to table, I vanish.' So saying, he was on the point of getting up; but on a given signal, 'Fortunata!' was bawled out four times or more by the whole troop of servants. She thereupon came in, wearing a white apron in such a fashion as to display beneath it her red gown, wreathed anklets, and gilt slippers. Then wiping her hands upon the handkerchief she wore about her neck, she ran up to the couch on which Scintilla, Habinna's wife, was reclining, and kissed her, as she was testifying her delight at her appearance with, 'Do I really see you, my dear?' And so things went on until Fortunata pulled off the



bracelets from her brawny arms, and showed them to the admiring Scintilla. At last she undid her anklets also, and her golden hair-net, which she informed us was of the finest standard. This was noticed by Trimalchio, who ordered them all to be brought to him. Then, 'Do you see,' quoth he, 'the woman's fetters? Look how we cuckold-holds are robbed and plundered; they ought to weigh six pounds and a half; and yet I have myself a bracelet ten pounds in weight, made out of Mercury's tithes upon my profits.' Finally, lest we should doubt his word, he sends for a pair of scales, and bids all around make sure of the weight. Nor was Scintilla a whit better behaved, for she took off from her neck a little case, which she called 'Good Luck,' out of which she produced two ear-drops, and gave them in her turn to Fortunata to examine, adding, 'Thanks to my lord and master, nobody else has such fine ones.' 'Yes,' says Habinna, 'you plagued me into buying you these glass beads; truly, if I had a daughter I should cut both her ears off. If there were no women we should have everything as cheap as dirt; but as it is, where we gain a penny we spend a pound.'"

Freed-men could only obtain the right to wear a ring of *solid* gold by an express decree of the Senate; and, as may be supposed, instances were not wanting of the nobles embracing this opportunity for paying court to the ruling favourite of the day; a piece of adulation thus commented on by Pliny, in a letter to Montanus: "You must have already observed, from my last letter, that I had remarked the monument of Pallas (freed-man of Claudius Caesar) bearing this inscription:—'To this man the Senate, to reward his fidelity and affection towards his master and mistress, decreed the insignia of the prætorian office, together with a donation of 150,000*l.*, of which vote he only accepted the honorary part.' I afterwards deemed it worth while to look up the decree itself. I found it so exaggerated and extravagant, that, compared with its language, that most arrogant of epitaphs appears not merely modest but even humble. The collected and united glories, not only of those ancient heroes the Africani, the Achaici, the Numantini, but even of those of later times, the Marii, the Syllas, the

Pompeys, not to go down further in the list, fall far short of the praises heaped upon a Pallas. Must I think the senators to have been joking, or mere miserable wretches? Joking, I should say, were joking consistent with the dignity of the Senate. Were they wretches, then? But no one can be sunk so low as to be forced thus to degrade himself. Was it done then from ambitious motives, and the desire of rising in the state? But who could be so senseless as to wish to rise through his own or the public disgrace in that empire where the sole advantage of the most exalted station was the privilege of being the first to sing the praises of a Pallas? I pass over the circumstance that the prætorian insignia are offered to Pallas—offered to a slave—inasmuch as it is slaves who offer them. I pass over the words of the vote, 'He must not merely be urged, but even compelled to wear a gold ring;' it being, forsooth, derogatory to the dignity of the Senate that a man of prætorian rank should wear an iron one."

Pliny, in the chapter so often quoted, is indignant that slaves should have taken to wear iron rings plated with gold, and thus evade the law. Such were called *Samothracian*, from the place where the fashion first arose.\* Of this sort numerous specimens are preserved. An apt illustration of such an ornament, as worn by one "of Cæsar's household," is the sale-catalogue description of an example formerly in the possession of a noted *antiquario*. "An antique iron ring, plated with gold; it has on the centre a gold medallion, with the busts of Augustus and Livia facing each other, in high relief." Another, in the Marlborough cabinet, has merely the shoulders plated with gold, and chased. The centre is a silver medallion of the same imperial busts, in relief on one side, in intaglio on the other, and turning upon a swivel within the beasil. The whole may, however, be

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\* I suspect they were at first badges of initiation into the Mysteries of the Cabiri, of which that island was the celebrated seat. The ingenuity displayed in the union of the two metals has in it something analogous to the nature of those mystic divinities, reputed offspring of Vulcan, and inventors of all the useful arts; and whose worship was introduced by the Phœnicians, the *inventors* of mining and metallurgy. Lucretius alludes to the "*Samothracia ferrea*" as things well known in his day.



merely a production of some sixteenth century forger, its appearance not being altogether satisfactory.

The Italian jewellers of the Cinque-cento period have lavished as much taste, and infinitely more labour, upon the making and chasing of rings in steel, as upon those in the precious metal. It may be that the worthlessness of the material having saved these, whilst the changes of fashion remorselessly consigned to the melting-pot the most exquisite specimens of such as possessed intrinsic value, will account for the fact that many rings in steel far surpass in originality of form, and in exquisite chasing of the most elaborate patterns, any similar works in gold of the same school. Wonderful examples of such, and also in bronze, attracted my admiration on looking over a large collection of rings of all periods, which had taken a whole half century to form at Vienna, and which subsequently was acquired by Lord Braybrooke. But we know that like works proceeded from the greatest artists of the times, after what Cellini himself has recorded in his *Life*, that during his first residence in Rome (1524), "within some ancient urns filled with ashes were found certain iron rings inlaid with gold and set with nicoli. The learned explained them as designed to endow the wearer with equanimity under all the changes of his fortune. At the request of certain gentlemen, I made several rings after this pattern, but in *fine steel*, elegantly engraved and inlaid with gold, which made a very handsome appearance, and for some of them I was paid as much as forty scudi\* each." And even this high price was far below their artistic value, if they at all equalled one in the same style in the Beverley Cabinet attributed to Cellini's hand. The gem (a balais, prettily engraved with the head of a nymph) is mounted in a moulded frame, upheld on either side by two tiny Cupids, seen sideways, each pair standing on the shoulders of a larger brother, displayed in front face, all chiselled in steel with indescribable perfection, and laid upon a shank of gold.

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\* The gold scudo of the time, worth intrinsically about nine shillings.



## SILVER RINGS.

RINGS in *silver* have come down to our times in abundance and great variety, some having the signet cut upon the metal itself (which is more usually the case), sometimes set with intagli in gems. The fact mentioned by Isidorus that this metal had become, under the Empire, the distinction of an emancipated slave, sufficiently accounts for their large numbers. Pliny notices the having seen Arellius Fuscus, who had been expelled for libel from the equestrian order, and consequently had forfeited his gold ring, appearing in public with a silver one on his finger, apparently out of bravado, and to show how little he cared for his degradation.

There are a considerable number of those with signets cut in the solid metal, the style of which at the first glance indicates a Grecian origin,\* but by far the greatest part date from the Lower Empire. This appears from their extremely quaint workmanship, the baseness of their metal, which is of the same low standard as the denarii of the reigns to which they belong, and the intagli usually set in them—

\* They are of the same graceful simplicity of shape, and as carefully finished as the more numerous solid gold rings of Magna Græcia. A stud of gold often traverses the head. The earliest Greek tombs furnish these, but no engraved gems.



attempts at imperial busts, eagles, Victories, and similar military devices, the latest productions of the decaying glyptic art. Their form also is commonly of the angular outline, only adapted for the little finger, and which, as already noticed, became the general fashion in the latest times of the Empire. Occasionally the shanks are ornamented with patterns in *niello*, an alloy of copper, lead, and sulphur (known even to the Egyptians and to Homer), fused into the lines of a pattern cut out in the metal—an art carried afterwards to such perfection by the Florentines of the Quattro-cento. Others have the shoulders elaborately fluted in the patterns common in late Roman jewellery. Some were not signets, but merely worn for ornament, since they have nothing on the face but a good wish in niello, usually PAX.AVE. (Waterton Cabinet), a fashion taken from the complimentary camei of the same age. A few, again, are set with paste intagli. In another example that has come in my way, found at Caerleon (*Isca Silurum*), the stone, a fine nicolo engraved with a Venus Victrix, was enchased in a gold collet,\* in the manner not unusual when set in the older rings of iron. As these silver rings are usually turned up on the site of camps and military stations, it may be supposed that, besides being a distinction between the freed-man and the slave, they were the ornament of the private soldiers or others whose position did not allow of a more valuable material in their signet, for the *gold* ring conferred the rank of the Tribune (colonel).

#### BRONZE RINGS.

Of rings in bronze, though naturally the most numerous now extant, owing both to the worthlessness and imperishability of the metal, none have ever come under my observation that seem anterior to the later times of the Empire. And this was to be expected, iron continuing so

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\* Another, still more massy, found in Yorkshire (now in my possession), has the intaglio, a seated figure milking a goat, in red jasper, similarly secured in a fine gold collet. The same collection (Dineley) possessed another, exactly similar in make, but set with an onyx representing a victorious Auriga in his four-horse car, seen in front, done in the latest Roman manner.

long the material for the poorer classes, and even, simultaneously with gold, for the opulent. It is probable most of these bronze rings were gilt when in wear, or else the metal so lacquered as to pass for gold. Some, indeed, may have been made out of that mixed metal, the Corinthian brass, an alloy of copper gold and silver, like our "jeweller's gold," much in request in Pliny's time, as he tells us, for dishes and similar utensils for the table. This composite metal would oxidize in the earth, and not be now distinguishable from ordinary bronze, unless it should be repolished.

A proof that these base trinkets were intended to pass for gold is the fact that they often occur of fanciful shapes and set with coloured pastes, not intagli, imitations of precious stones; mere ornamental jewellery, not signets. It is in bronze rings that paste intagli, retaining their antique settings, do occur, and that almost without an exception; for only two instances of pastes set in gold have ever come under my notice—one, a fine imitation of sardonyx, a sphinx in cameo, the other an intaglio, a goblet in an elegant setting, in the Waterton Dactyliotheca. In fact, few pastes can be received without suspicion unless they retain their ancient settings of base metal, or appear cut and trimmed ready for such mounting. Pastes of very elaborate execution, both in cameo and intaglio, have come down to us in massy rings of this kind, which when in their pristine freshness must have imposed on the beholder for gold and real gem. Such must have been the "well dissembled emerald on the hand" of the exquisite in Martial, who, after pricing all manner of the most expensive rarities, pledges his ring, and that with difficulty, for eight *nummi* (two francs) wherewith to buy himself a dinner:—

"Oppigneravit nuper Marsyas ad mensam,  
Vix octo nummis annulum unde cenaret."

Real stones engraved are rarely found set in this kind of rings; such were too dear for the poor wearer, whilst the impostor made a better figure with a fine coloured paste in his gilded ring.

Besides these, a large number are to be seen with the device cut



upon the metal. The simplicity of some of these, a scorpion, a bee, a fish, may perhaps furnish an argument for assigning them to a higher antiquity than the limit fixed at the beginning of this chapter. When the old man's wife in Aristophanes, as above quoted, talks of getting a facsimile of her husband's signet made for the small price of half-a-drachma, she must necessarily mean one in base metal.

Like the Chinese, the ancients with all their ingenuity were never able to invent a lock on the security of which they could depend. In the heroic ages Homer represents them as securing the doors of store-rooms and chests of valuables by means of artfully tied knots in the cord fastening them, which could only be loosened by the party who had made them. Even after locks of some kind had come into general use (for Roman keys are plentiful enough), the good housekeeper made assurance doubly sure by putting his seal on the store-room door every time he closed it. This was the duty of the mistress of the house, for Vopiscus quotes, in illustration of Aurelian's simple mode of life, that he made his wife continue to carry the "*annulus signetorius*," as when they were both in a private station. Diogenes Laertius, to put in the strongest light the simplicity of Lacydes the philosopher, tells a story that, whenever he had occasion to bring anything out of his pantry, after sealing it up he used to throw the ring into it through a hole in the door, for fear his servants should take it off his finger when asleep, and therewith reseal the place after they had helped themselves to the comestibles. But his servants, observing his sapient precaution, imitated his mode of procedure, invaded the pantry in all security, sealed the door again, and replaced the ring in the way shown them by their sagacious master.

Examples of these housekeepers' signets are the bronze stamps, sometimes cut into the shape of a foot or other quaint device, and engraved with a proper name either in full or contracted, and having a shank attached to the reverse, showing they were intended to be worn as finger-rings. Besides securing doors, such stamps served to seal the pitch or plaster stopping the mouth of the wine-jar, the

tampering wherewith by the servants was the sorest trial of pater-familias's patience; for Horace quotes, as a proof of equanimity,

"Signo fracto non insanire lagenæ."

"Nor run stark mad if the flask's seal be cracked."

With such stamps the potters marked their names on their ware, on the handles of the amphoræ, and on the inside of their table crockery, or "*vasa escaria*."

But the most singular thing about them is that many exist with the legend-letters in relief, and therefore could not have served the purposes already enumerated, in which the *impression* itself is invariably in relief, and therefore must have come from a matrix in intaglio. These therefore could only have been employed when inked over, like printing type, and so applied to the parchment or papyrus requiring official authentication, being in fact stereotypes on a small scale. It therefore is a necessary inference that they were intended for signing documents required perpetually and in large quantities at once; like the office-stamps used for the same purpose in the passport bureaux on the Continent. Such an explanation is supported by the existing practice amongst all Mohammedan nations of inking the signet, whether in stone or metal, and thus transferring it to the paper requiring the signature; the use of wax for the purpose being unknown in those countries. It is very probable the large Sassanian seals in cameo were similarly applied: usages are so unvarying in the East, that the present existence of any custom affords a pretty sure warrant that it was equally in use fifteen hundred years ago.

To return to our proper subject, it must be noted that *medieval* rings of a similar material are much more numerous than the antique, the excessive penury of the times rendering such the common ornament of classes in society who anciently had only known the precious metals in such a form. The Roman relics may, however, be distinguished from the medieval so abundantly turned up in the earth of every old town, not merely by the superiority of their shapes, but by the different composition of their metal. Roman works are invariably made of



bronze—copper and *tin*; mediæval of *latten*, or brass (*laiton*), a compound of copper and *zinc*. Bronze when polished has somewhat of a brownish tint, with the *hardness* of forged iron; brass, on the contrary, more resembles gold in colour, and is much softer than bronze.

I will conclude with a notice of perhaps the most curious Roman relic in this class that anywhere exists, one of huge dimensions preserved amongst the Rutupine antiquities in Trinity College Library. On the face are cut the letters F and E, repeated so as to form a square, and seemingly containing the letter L in monogram, perhaps intended to convey the wish, "*Feliciter (Good luck to you!)*," the regular nuptial benediction; "*dictum feliciter,*" Juvenal puts amongst the details of the wedding ceremony. The legend on the shank, "*Stimmius Amato N,*"—Stimmius to Amatus, a New Year's gift—is very curious, from the shape of the *a* and the final *s*, *Λ*, *ℓ*, regular Saxon characters, and supposed to belong to a period long posterior to the complete evacuation of this island by the Romans. The whole ring retains traces of a very thick gilding.

#### LEADEN RINGS.

In lead rings occur, though they are extremely rare, set with intagli of early date and good work, and not with the rude gems or cheaper pastes that point out the ornaments of the plebeian hand. It is evident that these leaden rings in their time passed for massy gold, a deception favoured by their weight and ductility, and not to be easily detected when encased in the thick envelope of gold-leaf, of which they often retain the trace. But since this casing could not be applied by means of heat, time and wear speedily separated it from the soft metal underneath. This fraud can be traced back to the remotest antiquity, Herodotus recording as a clever trick, highly relished by a Greek, that Polycrates (the hero of the Ring\*) bought off his Spartan

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\* The famous *Fox Piscis* cries aloud in testimony to this legend. In the belly of a cod-fish exposed for sale in Cambridge market-place, Midsummer Eve, 1628, was found

invaders, when they appeared too strong for resistance, in Samian gold pieces, coined for the nonce in gilt lead.

A singular trick of some ancient rogue accidentally came to light in a ring in my own possession, of old Greek work, bulky, hollow, and set with an intaglio head of Jupiter Ammon. Both subject and style make me refer it to Cyrene, that city where, according to Eupolis\* (*Ælian* xii. 30), the poorest had signet rings worth ten minæ (30*l.*), and the artists engaged in engraving gems "were really wonderful," but whether for their numbers or their skill he does not say. The gem in question had always protruded somewhat from the setting, and at last was drawn out by the sealing-wax on which it was impressed, when it appeared that all the hollow behind it had been filled up with lead-foil folded tight, still retaining, its form, but converted by time into a brittle oxide, showing by the total conversion of its substance, for how many centuries it had occupied that position. We possibly behold here the ingenious contrivance of some sharp dealer in articles of *virtù*, under King Battus, to extract a few more drachmæ out of some unsuspecting client.

The Venetian *anello della morte*, that plays so terrible a part in the poisoning stories of the seventeenth century, was no fiction. Rambossom relates a recent occurrence in Paris testifying very strongly to the reality of the belief. An antiquary having bought amongst other pieces of old Italian jewellery an elaborately chased ring, accidentally scratched his hand with the projecting foliation of the beasil. Next day he felt all the symptoms of paralysis, which his physician could only explain by poison\* infused into the blood by the same puncture. On therefore examining the ring, its head was found to contain two steel fangs, hollow, and capable of protrusion on the

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a manual of devotion wrapped up in canvas, containing three treatises (one being John Frith's 'Mirror'). The book was carried to the Vice-Chancellor, who carefully investigated all the circumstance of the discovery, and ascertained their truth. The manual was then republished under the title of 'Vox Piscis.'

\* In his 'Marica,' brought out A.D. 421; a valuable notice, as indicating the commonness of engraved gems amongst the wealthy Greeks at the early date.



pressure of a spring at the back. These still contained traces of the poison with which they were originally charged. The wearer in the olden time had merely to give his enemy a cordial shake of the hand, under pretence of reconciliation, and the next day was rid of him by "the judgment of God."

To conclude this chapter of curious rings with an anecdote well worthy of its place. "The first duke of Wellington, meeting Miss Dawson Damer at a dinner party, was observed to look intently at a ring worn by that lady. After dinner he accosted her, and requested to be allowed to see it, as the children say, 'in his own hands.' 'Where did you get this ring' said F.M. the duke.—'It belonged to the late Mrs. Fitzherbert,'—'Yes. Do you know the trick of it? have you opened it?'—'Opened it? I know of no trick,' exclaimed the lady. The duke touched a spring, and showed behind the ring a tiny miniature of the Regent in his best days. 'There were two of these rings,' explained the Duke. 'They were exactly alike, so my attention was drawn to yours. The fellow ring to this differed from it in that it enclosed the likeness of Mrs. Fitzherbert. The king gave that one to me before he died, and ordered me to place it on his breast before the coffin was closed down. I did so.'" (Beste, 'Nowadays at Home and Abroad,' i. p. 120.)





FIGURE RINGS.

THE fashion of wearing on the fingers figures of Egyptian deities, thus ridiculed by Pliny (xxxiii. 12): "*Jam vero et Harpocratem, statuasque Ægyptiorum numinum in digitis viri quoque portare incipiunt,*" has left us a beautiful specimen, to be seen in the Case of scarabei in the British Museum (Egyptian department). Three busts, of Osiris, Isis, and the little Horus, admirably modelled in full relief in gold, the style Roman-Egyptian, placed side by side, form the head of a ring, the shank being attached at their back. Caylus figures another exactly similar, with a third of the same class, in which the busts of Osiris and Isis form the extremities of a round shank, being so brought together as to lie side by side, but pointing in opposite directions. In the Waterton Collection is one of bronze, from the beasil of which projects a bust of Serapis in the same metal, chased out of the solid with great spirit, and probably affording a precise idea of the construction of those rings bearing, "*principis imaginem ex auro,*" which were invented by the courtiers of Claudius.

Such rings composed bodily of deities remind us of those still common in Italy, formed out of a crucifix bent until the foot and upper limb of the cross meeting together make up the shank, so that the crucified figure becomes the most conspicuous feature in the orna-



ment. Others, again, dating from the Cinque-cento, open and disclose a skeleton, the one master idea that runs through all mediæval thought and art. The same Egyptian influence upon Roman thought is also manifested in the numerous rings still extant made to represent the sacred asp, coiled up in several folds, and which being frequently found in company with female ornaments as deposited in the sepulchre, are supposed to have been exclusively worn by the fair sex, with whom the worship of Isis, so strongly recommended by its affectation of purity and mystery, had from its first introduction into Italy almost superseded every other creed. Some, again, are evidently connected with the Bacchanalia, rites that for a short time flourished amazingly at Rome in the later times of the Republic, until they degenerated into such schools of debauchery, that they were put down by a most severe decree of the Senate. Amongst the Uzielli antique jewels was a remarkable relic of the sort, the exquisite work of which was the surest indication that its date preceded the times of the Empire. A square tablet is filled with the figure of a tiger couchant, cut out of the gold, the field being pierced *à jour*. From the upper part of the tablet rises a pediment, formed by a tall Bacchic crater between two lions rampant for supporters. The shank is a broad, flat band, ornamented with ivy-leaves in pierced work. Another belonging to the same class supports a pyramid, truncated, of four degrees, each face of the lowest step containing a door, so that the passages intersect in the centre. On the flat summit is engraved in intaglio a little tiger, the favourite companion of the Indian Bacchus. The idea of this singular decoration, so replete with symbolism, must have been imported from India together with the Mysteries to which it belongs. The Hindoos of the present day have massy silver rings, with heads fashioned into small pagodas, presenting an analogy of taste that cannot be the result of accident, although their proportions are exaggerated. Two fine specimens may be seen amongst the Indian antiquities of the British Museum.

I have already alluded to the Hindoo fashion of wearing a small mirror set in a ring, in order to solace the dusky beauty with the most

agreeable of all reflections, her own charms; and have suggested the probability that the antique Campanian rings, with the large, flat, plane disks, were intended for the same purpose, for which as long as the metal was burnished they were admirably adapted.\* Pliny's remark upon the *emerald*, that stones having their surface an exact plane reflected objects like a mirror, seems to imply that exquisites used them for such a purpose. This is sufficiently probable, for numbers of Roman *pocket* mirrors, no larger than a "First Brass" coin (which generally forms the lid), are to be seen in collections. It is therefore a natural inference that a stone serving the same office, at once ornamental, precious, and portable, must have been prized above all other jewels. But the emerald, whose aid enabled the near-sighted Nero to view the combats in the arena, must for that purpose have been a stone hollowed out at the back, rendering it a concave lens, and likewise have been set *à jour* in the emperor's ring, to have thus served for a lorgnette.

These portable aids to devotion give occasion to notice the *Decade* rings of mediæval times, which so often puzzle the finders as to their original use. They are frequent in brass, and sometimes turn up in silver, and may be easily recognised by the *ten* little projections (whence their name) like cogs upon their circumference, standing for so many *Aves*, whilst the round head engraved with I.H.S. and the *Three Nails*, that ancient and mystic symbol, represents the *Pater Noster*. They were worn by devotees, as being more portable than the usual rosary, as a substitute for which they could be used at night by the wearer when unable to sleep, or if awakened by some ill-boding dream. Perhaps, too, the inconvenience of the projecting cogs perpetually making itself felt between the fingers served for a mild variety of penance, and converted the ornament into an ingenious engine for gently mortifying the flesh, an all-sufficient recommendation with the pious of the age to which the invention belongs.

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\* Pliny actually states that silver mirrors (which had then come into general use) reflected objects better if gilt on the back.





STONE RINGS.

Rings carved entirely in the solid stone appear to have been much in fashion with the Romans under the Lower Empire, just as similar (though smaller) ornaments in carnelian are amongst their female descendants at the present day. They are now worn as a kind of amulet against sickness, from some traditional notion of the virtue anciently ascribed to the sard. Indeed, the judicious De Laet, writing in 1645, speaks from his own experience of the singular power of the carnelian to stop a bleeding at the nose, and the consequent use of rings entirely formed of that stone; and in fact the object for which they are still worn is somewhat similar in its nature.

For the ancient rings, calcedony, a tough and hard material, was preferred, but they occur also in crystal, green jasper, and amber. The low epoch at which they begin to appear makes it probable that the first idea of their construction was borrowed from the hemispherical calcedony stamps of the Sassanian Persians. There is indeed, in the Marlborough cabinet, an extraordinary specimen of the class, which lays claim to a higher antiquity, a thumb-ring cut out of one entire and perfect sapphire—rather a pale one it is true—and lined with a thick gold hoop for greater security. On the signet part stands now engraved a fine head of Faustina Mater, which, however, is

manifestly the work of a modern hand, and has superseded the original Arabic seal-inscription.

In fact some of the Sassanian seals, with the sides ornamentally carved and the aperture large, much resemble rings with a disproportionately thick shank, and even though a somewhat inconvenient appendage, may have been worn on the little finger. Another proof of the late origin of the Roman examples may be deduced from the fact that the genuine are usually talismanic. In the Hertz collection was one very unwieldy in make, entirely covered with Gnostic devices, and Dr. Walsh figures a second of the same description procured in Egypt. Another, but in green jasper, has come in my way, engraved for a signet with the Agathodæmon Serpent; and I once possessed the fragment of a fourth, the device of which was Horus floating in his *baris*, with this title, *IAΩ*. But those of slighter proportions, and more convenient for wearing, especially when they present intagli of good execution, and subjects falling within the true domain of ancient art, such as portraits and full-length figures, are probably all modern Mohammedan rings, re-engraved by Italian artists of the Cinque-cento.\* Those in crystal, when antique, have a remarkable peculiarity, the shank being twisted like a cable-moulding. The finest of the kind known to me, found at Arles, large and massy, but with an aperture only intended for a string, bore for type the Hebe drinking out of a bowl, the *Juventas* of the imperial medals, so favourite a device with the Romans from its happy augury. Others, similar in the twisted pattern of the shank, exhibit the Christian monogram. Such crystal rings may have refreshed the fair wearers with the same agreeable coolness in the summer heats as the crystal spheres they (like the Japanese still) carried for the same object, as Propertius tells us (ii. 24 and iv. 3):—

"Now courts the air with plumes of peacocks fanned,  
Now holds the flinty globe to cool her hand."

"O! what avails the Punic purple rare,  
Or that my hands the limpid crystal bear."

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\* I am inclined to refer to the same school the giant of the family figured by Montfaucon (Supplement, III. pl. 14). It is no less than nine inches in circumference, and presents in high relief a well-executed bust of Plotina (Piccolomini Cabinet).



Rings in *amber*, from the perishable nature of that mineral, are rare in the extreme. Only one example is known to me, that in the Waterton Collection, which is of considerable bulk, and has its shoulders most artistically carved into *amorini* in relief. Such amber rings came again into vogue at the Revival. Gesner, on the title-page of his book 'De Lapidibus,' has for vignette one so cleverly cut out of a piece, that a fossil beetle contained therein becomes the central ornament on the face of the ring. It was apparently amber rings that the Romans attempted to imitate by those in brown paste occasionally met with.

The Mohammedans still retain the ancient predilection of the Orientals for signet rings of stone. These are common in agate, calcedony, and carnelian, and, for the most part, are formed after one and the same pattern, which serves to betray them when converted into *antiques* by the Italians. The *beasil* is a long oval, with the edge projecting all round; the shoulders of the ring are sloped off at an angle from this; the shank is cylindrical, with a little boss at the apex of the circle. Of these the more ancient are of large size and very stout, being made for the thumb, and intended to assist in drawing the bowstring in those times when archery was yet the principal arm of the East.\* For the Turks used to pull the string with the bent thumb, catching it against the ring, and not with the two forefingers like the Europeans. In the good old times of Turkish rule when the *bowstring* was the authorized method for dismissing from office vizier and pasha, these rings played an essential part in the ceremony. The two ends of the string (thick silk) put round the patient's throat were passed through the ring, and were pulled sharply with the right hand, whilst the ring itself, held firmly against the nape of the neck, furnished the necessary fulcrum for the left hand of the operator; as Tavernier minutely describes the process.

The faces of these rings are covered with Arabic or Persian legends

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\* Buffalo-horn is a more common material for these archers' rings. Tavernier mentions one of the Sultans as amusing his leisure hours in their manufacture. In mediæval Europe a ring cut out of ass-hoof was considered a sure preservative against epilepsy.

containing the name and titles of the owner, coupled often with some religious motto, the characters not deeply cut. For Oriental signets are not made for impressing wax, but being smeared over with the glutinous ink of the country, applied to them with the left thumb, they are pressed upon the paper to be authenticated thereby, and leave their mark after the manner of a copper-plate engraving.\*

Rings in earthenware covered with the favourite blue glaze seem to have been popular with the Egyptians as the ornament of the fingers of the poorer classes; doubtless, as their fragility betokens, only intended for holiday wear. Their bezels are for the most part fashioned into the symbolical Eye of Osiris. The same country, and conditions, produced those in ivory, not unfrequently found upon the mummies, and which sometimes retain traces of gilding and paint. This latter fashion seems to have found favour with the Romans; the (late) Mertens Schaaffhausen Cabinet contained several. A few amongst them, discovered in the south of France, are genuine, but the rest, like the majority of supposed antiques in ivory, are due to the knavish ingenuity of the Frankfort *kunst-händler*, their recent origin being betrayed by the gelatine still maintaining its place inside their porous structure.

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\* These masterpieces of the Indian lapidary had found their way to Europe in the Middle Ages, as the following extract proves: "A very good and rich ring, made entirely of a good ruby balays, which my late lord, the Duke Philippe (whom may God assoil), ordered by his will to be put on the finger of the Dukes of Burgundy, his successors, at the ceremony of taking possession of the Duchy of Burgundy, in the Church of St. Remigius at Dijon." (Inventory of the Duc de Bourgoyne, A.D. 1420.) The true nature of this ring is placed out of doubt by one in solid emerald,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch in diameter, engraved with the name of the Emperor Jehanghir, presented by Shah Soojah to the East India Company, and now belonging to the Hon. Miss Eden.





## MAGICAL RINGS.

The belief in talismans working in the form of rings goes back to the most remote antiquity. Plato in his 'Republic' has preserved the legend of the wondrous ring taken by the shepherd Gyges from off the finger of some primeval giant entombed within a brazen horse, and which, the beasil being turned inwards, rendered its wearer invisible. And Clemens quotes Aristotle to the effect that "Excectus, tyrant of the Phocians, used to wear two enchanted rings, by the clinking whereof against each other he was apprised of the fitting season for executing his designs. Nevertheless, he perished by assassination though warned beforehand by the magic sound."\*

Lucian in his 'Philopseades' notices the virtue possessed by a ring

\* The belief lost nothing with the progress of centuries, and the cultivation of Faith as the highest of virtues. Petrarch (Ep. l. 3) graphically tells the wild legend he had heard at Aix-la-Chapelle accounting for Charlemagne's excessive fondness for the place. How the great emperor was so passionately enamoured of a woman of low degree as not to bear to be separated from her corpse upon her sudden death, but carried it about with him whithersoever he went; how Archbishop Turpin, suspecting some witchcraft in the matter, searched and found a small ring hidden under the dead woman's tongue; how thereupon the royal affections were diverted upon the prelate; and how the latter, to free himself from their inconvenient exigence, tossed the charm into the hot spring of the city, and so riveted his sovereign to the spot for the remainder of his reign.

forged out of the nail of a cross, to give the wearer power over all demons he may encounter. The metal was perhaps supposed to have become instinct with the spirit of the poor wretch who had expired in lingering agony upon it. But other iron rings are known in which the peculiar crystallization of the metal proves them to be made out of *meteoric* iron; and, indeed, what metal could be esteemed of a diviner nature than that actually seen to fall from heaven—a very portion of Jove's own bolt? Hence we find a large aerolite worshipped from primitive times, as the most holy representative of the Godhead; the black stone at Pessinus, called Cybele, and the same object at Emesa, the venerated emblem of Baal.\*

From these magic rings in iron, so potent for defence against wandering demons, descends *our* own rural charm of nailing up a horse-shoe on the lintel of the door to keep out witchcraft; a practice which can moreover boast the most venerable antiquity, though in a somewhat different shape: "Præfigere in limine avulsos, sepulcris clavos† adversus nocturnas lymphationes prodest," says Pliny, enumerating the "super-accidental" virtues of the metal iron. To have a circle drawn around one with a sword-point cured either child or man that had been bewitched; and to be slightly punctured on the ailing part with a sword that had beheaded a man was a sovereign remedy for pains in the side and chest.

A ring, the proper badge for some Cornelius Agrippa of the Middle Ages, once came in my way: it was a broad hoop of pure gold, presenting in relief the hieroglyphics of the Signs, done in the most ingenious and effective style.‡ But indeed during the whole course of the Gothic

\* Plutarch mentions that the great stone which fell from heaven on the day of the battle of Aegros-potamos, was still venerated by the people of the Thracian Chersonesus, some six hundred years after the event ('Lysander').

† What should *nails* do in tombs? The only answer that can be found is the Etruscan custom of driving rows of long bronze nails into the walls of the sepulchral chamber, on which were hung the vases containing the libations to the Manes. A proof this of the high antiquity of the usage Pliny cites.

‡ I have since met with other examples precisely similar. The rings may be Oriental; the Turks still *cure* diseases of the brain by binding about the temples a parchment band painted with the Zodiacal Signs.



ages, and until this ornament once more reverted to the rule of taste under the jewellers of the Cinque-cento, rings, both as regards the setting, and, still more, the stone when not simple signets, were designed to act as talismans or amulets. Hence the infinite abundance of such relics yet in existence, and the partiality they exhibit for *silver* as their material—the metal specially under the influence of the moon.

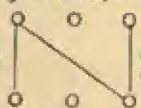
\* Long before Lucian's times Aristophanes makes a humorous application of the custom of wearing charmed rings to keep off evil spirits and serpents, in the reply of the honest man to the common informer (Plut. 883):—

"I care not for thee, for I wear a ring,  
For which I paid one drachma to Eudemus.—  
But tis no charm against the informer's bite."

And Athenæus (iii. 96) quotes Antiphanes for another sort, exactly answering to the galvanic rings of our day, a preservative against all manner of aches and pains, immortalizing at the same time some Attic Dr. Pulvermacher, for his miser is introduced saying—

—"In a kettle  
Beware lest I see any one boil water,  
For I've no ailment; may I never have one!  
But if perchance a griping pain should wander  
Within my stomach or about my navel,  
I'll get a ring from Phertatus for a drachma."

In the second century a physician of repute, Alexander of Tralles, recommends, from his own experience, as a preservative from the colic,

an iron ring with the symbol \* cut on the beasil; the shank to have eight faces, on each of which must be engraved two syllables of the strange legend—

ΦΕΤΤΕ ΦΕΤΤΕ ΙΟΥ ΧΟΑΗ Η ΚΟΥΤΑΛΛΑΟΣ ΣΕ ΖΗΤΕΙ.

"Fly, fly, Ho! hile, the lark is after thee!"

The espousal ring of King Hydaspes (*Æth.* viii. 11) "was set with

\* Of unknown origin, but used by the Gnostics. It occurs on one of the lead scrolls from the sarcophagi of the Villa Massimi, where it accompanies a figure of Anubis.

the stone called *Panturbes*, engraved with certain sacred characters, which embodied, as it proved, some charm through means whereof a virtue was communicated to the gem antagonistic to fire, and therefore bestowing immunity from harm upon its wearer in the midst of the flames." It was by having such a ring concealed about her that Chariclea escaped unharmed from the pyre to which she had been condemned by the jealous Arsace.\*

The *Planetary Rings*, to which such wonderful virtues were attributed in the Middle Ages, were formed of the gems assigned to the several planets, set each in the appropriate metal, as follows. Of the Sun, the diamond, or the sapphire in a ring of gold; of the Moon, crystal in silver; of Mercury, loadstone in quicksilver (how fixed our sage omits to tell us); of Venus, amethyst in copper; of Mars, emerald in iron; of Jupiter, carnelian in tin; of Saturn, turquoise in lead. The philosophy of the subject is most curiously set forth by Petrus Arleusis de Scudalupis, in his treatise, 'De Sympathia Metallorum.'

We often meet with allusions in the classic poets to the *Ἰνγξ*, *Rhombus*, or *Turbo*, the magic wheel used by the witches in their operations, and standing first in the list of love-charms, for it possessed the power of inspiring love when spun one way, and of delivering from its bondage when made to revolve in the contrary direction, as appears from Horace's prayer to Canidia:—

"Retro potentem, retro solve turbinem!"

"Reverse thy magic wheel and break the spell!"

Sometimes this wonder-working instrument was of metal, for Theocritus makes his enchantress say (Id. ii.)—

"As twirls this brazen wheel by Cupid's power,  
So may my lover roam about my door."

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\* Still more wonderful in its operation was the ring mentioned by Photius ('Isidorus'). The philosopher Theophrastus, finding his wife barren, and therefore wishing to lead a continent life in her company, made for her, with her own consent, the "Ring of Chastity," according to the directions of Ision the Chaldean, the wearing whereof completely reconciled her to the arrangement. Unfortunately the Patriarch has omitted to copy so invaluable a recipe.



Such a wheel appears figured in a unique glass paste (Praun gems), where Nemesis and Cupid stand on each side of a column supporting a wheel, over which runs a cord; a picture which Horace appears to have had in view when he advises the proud beauty:—

“Ingratam Veneri pone superbiam  
Ne currente retro funis eat rota.”

Some, however, were formed out of entire gems, like that of the sorceress Nico, made of amethyst, as we find from her dedicatory inscription upon it, preserved in the Anthology (v. 205):—

“That Iynx famed which power to Nico gave  
To draw the lover o’er the distant wave,  
And from her couch, half willing, half afraid,  
At dead of night to lure the trembling maid,  
Cut from bright amethyst by a skilful hand,  
Encircled beauteous in its golden band,  
Hangs on a yarn of twisted purple rove,  
A treasure pleasing to the Queen of Love:  
Which here the sorceress old, Larissa’s dread,  
Her vows fulfilled, for grateful tribute paid.”

Chiflet figures (No. 47) a hexagonal prism in calcedony, terminating in two obtuse pyramids. On one of the sides is engraved the Cynocephalus, with the letters IXEI; the others left blank. This he plausibly supposes a *Turbo*, used for magical purposes, and his explanation is supported by the primary meaning of the word, “a whipping-top,” for his calcedony was clearly intended to spin upon either of its points. Raspe also gives (No. 231) another exactly similar in form, but of red jasper. These objects apparently formed once a part of the *sacra* carried in the Isiac coffer, or *cista mystica*, amongst which the *turbo* is specified by Eusebins (Præp. Evan. ii. 3). “The symbols of the sacred rites are the die, the ball,\* the *turbo*, some apples, the wheel, the mirror, a fleece of wool.”

But there is another acceptation of the word *Iynx*, and an extremely

\* It is only consistent with the analogy of other matters to suppose that this *ball* was made out of some valuable stone; at least I have myself observed two spheres which evidently refer to the rites of this goddess. The first, in red jasper, 14 inch in diameter, was engraved with a small medallion filled with various symbols. The other, in green jasper, bore the busts of Osiris and Isis, inscribed  $\Phi\Lambda$ , probably for *Pharia*

curious one, concerning which a short notice will not be here inopportune. It properly signifies the bird *Motacilla*, which for some unexplained cause was ever held of mighty efficacy in magical operations; and there exists an ancient picture of the magic wheel, formed by fixing the bird by the extremities of its beak, tail, and two wings, at equidistant points within a circle, of which it thus constitutes the spokes, like a criminal about to be broken on the wheel.\* A beetle having a human head, with its wings expanded, is seen painted upon the breast of certain mummies, supposed from their sumptuous decoration to be those of royal personages. This singular being is supposed by Kircher to be an *Iynx*: whether this be so or not, it is more than probable that the mediæval cherub, without a body, was borrowed from it. Now Damis, records Philostratus, saw four *Iynxes* (unfortunately he has thought it needless to describe their forms), suspended from the ceiling of the Parthian King Bardanes, which was covered with lapis-lazuli embossed with figures of the gods in gold. They were set up there by the Magi, to remind the monarch of the power of Nemesis, and to repress his pride. These may be supposed to have represented the *Ferouers*, or protecting genii of the Magian creed, for the term is used as equivalent to the Platonic "Ideas" in the Zoroastrian Oracles:

Νοσόμενα Ἰνγες παρὸς τοῖσιν καὶ ἀνταί.

For the *Ferouers* are the Ideas conceived in the mind of Ormuzd, previous to, and the archetypes of, the visible Creation. From the use of the term in the passage of Damis, there seems reason for concluding that these spiritual beings were formed something like their derivatives, the Seraphim of the later Jews, with abundance of wings and destitute of a body, so suggesting to the eye of the Greek travellers the figure of the well-known magic bird. And again, in

(compare the *ISIS PAMIA* on Julian's coins), surrounded by the heads of twelve gods arranged in a circle; the intagli done in a very good manner (Hertz). The size and weight of these spheres prove they were not intended for ornaments nor for signets.

\* On a beautiful Etruscan gold ring (Hamilton Collection), a winged Venus, seated upon a myrtle-twined altar, holds forth by the tip of its wings this wonder-working bird. (Figured *ante*, p. 361.)



these symbolical and mystic wheels to which the description equally applies, we have the idea of Ezekiel's intersecting wheels full of eyes, the souls, or Ferouers, of his "Living Things," the agents of the Godhead.

Again, how the Ferouers were personified by the Sassanian priesthood may be gathered from the curious account Cedrenus gives (i. 723), how Heraclius having entered into the city of Gazacus, found there "the abominable idol of Chosroes, the representation of himself, in the *spherical* edifice within the palace, enthroned therein as in heaven, and around him the sun, moon, and stars, which the superstitious king worshipped as gods; *angels* also had he placed there, standing around like sceptre-bearers. Moreover, this enemy of God had so contrived, by means of certain mechanism, that drops of water should fall from the ceiling to imitate rain, and that sounds like thunder should reverberate therefrom." These *angels*, as the Sassanian rock-sculptures abundantly show, wore the exact form of the mediæval embodiment of the same idea, and can hardly be distinguished from the *Victories* of classic art. But the royal *Ferouer*, as the monuments of the Achæmenidæ and the Persian engraved gems exhibit him soaring above the monarch, is imaged in the form of his own bust rising out of a circle, and furnished with the wings of a dove. And this type may illustrate the name used by Damis for the *four* images in Bardanes' hall of audience (four is the number in Ezekiel's vision), for the magic bird, as already noticed, was spread out within a circle. On the reverse of certain coins of Chosroes I., his Ferouer appears as a bust in front-face, hovering over the sacred fire upon the altar.

A curious method of divination by means of the scarabeus is prescribed in the 'Magic Papyrus' of the British Museum, a manual of some Alexandrian Cagliostro, of the second century as Goodwin judges from the character of the writing.

*The Ring of Hermes: the Ceremony of the Beetle.*—"Take a beetle (scarabeus) engraved as described below, place it on a paper table, and under the table a pure linen cloth, and lay under it some olive sticks, and place on the middle of the table a small censer, and offer myrrh and *kyphi*, and have in readiness a small chrysolite vessel, into which

put ointment of lilies, of myrrh, and cinnamon, and take the ring and put it into the ointment; first purifying it from every defilement, and offer in the censer the *kyphi* and myrrh. Leave it three days, and take it and put it in a pure place.

"At the celebration let there lie near at hand some pure loaves, and such fruits as are in season; and having made another sacrifice, upon vine sticks, take the ring out of the ointment, and anoint yourself with the unction from it. Anoint yourself early in the morning, and turning yourself towards the east, pronounce the words underwritten, *The Engraving of the Beetle*. Engrave a beetle upon a precious emerald gem, bore it, and pass a gold wire through. Upon the under side of the beetle engrave the holy Isis, and having performed the rites above directed, make use of it." Then follows a very long spell to be addressed to Thoyth, or Hermes, with the face turned eastwards, as the inventor of medicine and of letters, invoking him to give the operator all knowledge, so as to know the thoughts of all men, and to be able to read sealed letters.

This chapter upon Magic and Cabalistic Rings cannot receive a more fitting conclusion than the following curious account of the mode of ascertaining the future through such instrumentality, designated for that reason, Dactyliomancy. It is Ammian's report of the confession, under torture, of Hilarius and Patricius, accused of conspiring to raise to the Empire a certain Gaul, Theodorus, under Valens, A.D. 371. "We constructed, illustrious judges, the ill-omened little table which you see before you, out of branches of the bay-tree, under direful auspices, after the fashion of the Delphic tripod. And after it had been consecrated, according to the rites prescribed, by the repetition of certain mystic verses over it, after many and tedious ceremonies at last we put it in motion. Now the method of using it, whenever it was consulted on matters of secrecy, was as follows:—It was set in the middle of the house, which had previously been purified by burning Arabian incense in all parts, with a round dish placed with pure hands upon it, which was composed out of various metals combined together. On the outer circumference of the rim of this dish the twenty-four



letters of the (Greek) alphabet were artfully engraved at equal distances from each other. Then one of us clothed in a linen garment, linen slippers on his feet, a fillet round his head, and a branch of a fruit-tree in his hand, stood over the tripod, as directed by the mystic science, having first propitiated by the proper form of incantation the deity, the author of the knowledge of the future; whilst he balanced over the tripod a *ring*, suspended by a very fine thread of Carpathian flax, and consecrated by magical ceremonies.'

"After he had thus distinctly laid the whole transaction, as it were, before the eyes of the judges, he added (out of consideration for his safety), that Theodorus himself was entirely unacquainted with the business. After which, being asked whether they had been forewarned by the oracle they had consulted as to the fate that awaited *themselves*, they disclosed those well-known lines clearly predicting that their enterprise of prying into things too high for them would be fatal to the inquirers, and *that* speedily; but yet that the Furies, denouncing fire and slaughter, threatened the emperor also and their judges; of which it will suffice to quote the last lines:—

'Not unavenged, O seer! thy blood shall flow,  
Tisiphone prepares the fatal blow  
For thy stern judges, all on Mima's plain,  
Aïla Kar! by fire devouring slain.'

Having ended their recital, they were cruelly tortured with the pincers, and carried out in a fainting condition."

It must be noticed here that the mysterious words Aïla Kar! are either Slavonic, a language often showing itself in oracles of Byzantine date, for example in that quoted by Procopius (Bell. Goth.):—

'Αἰρωμένης Ἀφρὴς Μῶνδος σὺν Νῶ τείρεσθαι—

"When Afric's conquered world and son shall die;"

which frightened the pious Byzantines, as announcing the speedy advent of the Last Day, until they found it verified on easier terms in the slaughter of General Mundus and his son by the Illyrians; or perhaps it may be a cabalistic word containing the numerals marking the date of the event foretold. This took place A.D. 378, for Valens

in a battle with the Goths being wounded by an arrow, was carried by his guards into an adjacent cottage, the door of which the enemy being unable to force, and galled with shots out of the upper storey, they piled straw against it, and consumed the house and all within. This mode of divination is now degraded to the humble use of telling the time of day. A wedding-ring hung over the ball of the thumb by a long thread, so as to drop just inside a glass tumbler, the elbow being steadied on the table, soon begins to vibrate from the beating of the pulse, and the strokes given against the glass will equal in number the nearest hour, either that past or that coming.\* "This ring, striking in its vibrations at regular intervals against the single letters that attracted it, formed heroic verses in answer to our questions, composed perfectly as to metre and numbers, such as the Pythian oracles we read of, or the responses given at Branchidæ. Thereupon, just as we were inquiring who was to succeed the present emperor—inasmuch as the response returned was that, 'he would be a prince in all respects perfect,' and also the ring in swinging to and fro had touched the two syllables ΘΕΟ, with the final addition of another letter—one of us present exclaimed that *Theodorus* was meant by the inevitable appointment of Fate. Nor was the inquiry on this point any further pursued, we being all satisfied that *he* was the person concerning whom we were consulting the oracle."

\* In De Boot's time this property was ascribed to the *turquoise* thus employed; and which he, in a most unusual, philosophic spirit, accounts for by the imagination of the holder affecting the pulse in the thumb, and so communicating the due number of pulsations to the thread. But whatever the cause, the accuracy of the result is very curious. *Crede experto.*







## PAPAL AND EPISCOPAL RINGS.

A gold ring set with a sapphire has been the appointed symbol of the episcopal dignity from a very early age of the Catholic Church, although it is probable that the monks of St. Denys had more of faith than of archaeology when they gloried in the possession of "son anneau Pontifical, qui est d'or, enrichy au milieu d'un beau saphir cabochon; et autour d'iceluy plusieurs autres pierreries et belles perles, avec ces mots:—ANNVLVS SANCTI DIONYSII." Yet Isidorus of Seville, as early as the seventh century, speaks of the bishop's investiture by the receiving of a ring as an old established institution, and thus explains its signification. "The ring is given to the bishop either as the badge of pontifical rank, or as the seal of secrets. For there be many things that priests, concealing from the senses of the vulgar and less intelligent, keep locked up as it were under seal."\* (De Off. Eccl. ii. 5.)

\* This is not the only allusion of early Christian doctors to the *esoteric* teaching of the Church, only to be imparted to the worthy few. Lactantius, after a full and lucid exposition of what are now termed the mysteries of revelation, alludes to other and deeper doctrines reserved for the initiated alone. What can have lain hid under this remarkable reticence? Some theosophic explanation of doctrines, in their outward form stumbling-blocks to the neo-platonist of the age? Some arcana of the nature of Freemasonry? Whatever this "hidden torch" was, it went out altogether during the long succeeding night of orthodoxy.

In the beginning the bishop's ring was of any material he preferred; that of Augustine was set with the intaglio of a man's head; that of Avitus of Vienne (6th century), of iron engraved with his monogram; that of Ebreghislaus, with Paul the Hermit and his raven; that of the Saxon Alstan of Sherborne, a uniformly scalloped gold hoop, with his name in niello; that of Gerard of Limoges (11th century), of gold, with the head elegantly wrought of four combined trefoils.\* It was not before the year 1194, that, by a decree of Innocent III., the character of the ring was definitively fixed, as to be made of pure solid gold, and set with a gem not engraved.

From this time forth the stone almost invariably selected for this honourable distinction was the sapphire, probably from its accredited virtue of testifying to and maintaining the virtue so essential to the episcopal dignity. "The sapphire is said to grow dim and lose its colour if worn by an adulterer or lascivious person. Worn in a ring or in any other manner it is believed to subdue lust, on which account it is suitable to be worn by the priesthood, and by all vowed to perpetual chastity." (Voss. *De Phys. Christ.* vi. 7.) That the ring in the beginning symbolized the mystical marriage of the bishop-elect to his diocese is an interpretation due to mediæval fancy, which, with Durandus, could spy out a mystery involved in every ecclesiastical appurtenance, even in a bell-rope or a window-jamb. The true origin of the custom is contained in Isidorus' first conjecture; it was derived from the custom of the empire, by which a ring was given to the military tribune upon his appointment to a legion—which ring, as early as Juvenal's times, had become a synonym for the office itself. The letter of Valerian above quoted (p. 345), proves that it was of a "regulation" character and weight. The *pontifical* ring of the Cesar, charged with a *litreus*, was the parent of the papal "*Annulus Piscatoris*."

Another reason for the preference of the sapphire to all other precious stones, may have been its supposed sympathy with the

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\* The subject has been well and fully treated of by Mr. Waterton in the '*Archæological Journal*,' xx. p. 224.



heavens, noticed by Solinus, its dedication on the same account to the God of Light; and perhaps a more prosaic reason, its *violet* hue corresponding with that of the vestments appropriated to the episcopal dignity. The bishop's violet truly represents the Roman "hyacinthina," the inferior degree of the Tyrian purple, and which Pliny compares to the colour of the "angry sea;" a very deep violet indeed, as every one will remember who has sailed upon the Mediterranean in rough weather. What the true shade of the "color hyacinthinus" was, is likewise apparent from another ancient application of the term. Josephus explains the *hyacinthine* portions of the Veil of the Temple as emblematical of the sky, as the *purple* were of fire and the *white* of water. For the best Tyrian purple was our crimson, since it is described as "the colour of clotted blood, dark when looked at directly, but bright red when held up above\* the eye;" and again, "shining dully with the hue of a dark rose," *i.e.*, a damask rose. (Plin. ix. 60 and 62.) The "purple ink," πορφύρεον ἐνκαυστόν,† with which the Byzantine Cæsars signed their documents, was like the "vermilion pencil" of the Chinese emperor, of red colour, as plenty of their charters remain to show. This is why the robe in the Saviour's Passion is called κοκκινὴ, *scarlet*, by Matthew, πορφύρα, *purple*, by Mark, both epithets being used in the same sense. For the Roman *coccus* was not our bright scarlet, only obtainable from the Mexican cochineal, but the dull red they extracted out of the native kermes insect. All this explains why *red*, as the superior colour, has been appropriated to the higher dignity of the Cardinalate.

These special insignia of office were, as a rule, interred with the prelates to whom they had belonged in life, and still deck the fingers

\* Hence the joke of Augustus, who, finding fault with the dead colour of some purple cloth offered to him, on the vendor's continually bidding him to look up at it, *i.e.*, hold it above his eye, retorted: "Must I then always be walking about in a balcony when I want to look fine?" (Macrob.) It would seem that "purpura" came to denote so many different colours, as properly meaning merely the murex-blood, which, according to its strength in the dye, produced all tints from dark crimson down to pale violet.

† ἔνκαυστόν, corrupted into the Italian "inchiostro," is the hitherto unknown parent of our "ink."

of skeletons whenever sarcophagi are come upon not previously rifled. Many therefore are to be seen in modern dactyliothecæ, obtained from the accidental desecration of the sepulchres of high ecclesiastics. Of these, the most ancient example known to myself is the ring (Braybrooke) found in the tomb of the Abbot of Folleville, near Amiens, in 1856. It is set with a large rough sapphire, is made of *electrum*, not fine gold, and is *hollow*, and entirely covered with the elegant guilloche pattern, *appliqué*, so common in Romanesque ornamentation—peculiarities all bespeaking a date antecedent to the regulation of Innocent III. To give some other examples of different periods. The Loan Collection of 1862, exhibited amongst other mediæval works the following interesting relics. "No. 7194. The ring of William of Wykeham, bishop of Winchester, a massive plain gold episcopal ring, set with a sapphire (Dean of Winchester). No. 7195. Large and massive gold episcopal ring, set with a large sapphire of irregular oval form, polished *en cabochon*, secured in the beasil by four small grips in the form of a fleur-de-lys. The sapphire is pierced longitudinally. Discovered in Winchester Cathedral. No. 7197. Gold ring, set with an oval intaglio in plasma, with profile head of Minerva. At either side of the beasil is a square faceted ornament set with small rubies. This ring was found in the coffin of Bishop Gardiner in the same cathedral." To the list may be added a very remarkable discovery made at Cambridge some forty years back, in digging the foundations of a house upon the site of the old graveyard of All Saints Church. Together with a hoard of Henry III.'s coins, were found five rings precisely identical in fashion, though of various sizes, and evidently all belonging to the same hand, for one had been enlarged by the insertion of a piece in the shank, so as to fit the forefinger. This ring is set with a sapphire, two with rough rubies, the fourth with a fine Indian garnet, of the fifth the stone is lost.\* Of this practice of interring the deceased ecclesiastic with all his pomp about him, Boccaccio makes an amusing use in his

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\* They have been lately deposited in the Library of Trinity College.



story of Andreuccio da Perugia, who, being reduced to utter despair by the trickery of a Syracusan courtesan, who despoiled him not only of his money but his clothes also, joins a couple of thieves in plundering the tomb of the Archbishop of Naples, interred that very day in all his precious vestments, and with a ring on his finger valued at 500 scudi. Two other parties of plunderers visit the tomb in quick succession, the last being headed by a priest of the cathedral itself, to which fortunate coincidence poor Andreuccio, who had been shut up in the sarcophagus by his comrades, owes his escape from a horrible death, and returns to Perugia with the ring, which more than makes up for all his losses.

Such valuable jewels as these were made to the prelate's own order, and at his own cost. In the present day the ring is supplied by the papal jeweller to the bishop-elect, from whom a fee of 500 dollars is exacted on its account. As might be expected, its intrinsic value does not come up to one-twentieth part of the sum; the sapphire being of the palest and cheapest quality, and the setting, though somewhat elegant, equally far from massive. On the back of the setting are chased in flat relief the arms of the reigning pontiff. These rings no longer accompany the owner to the next world, but share the lot of the rest of his personalty, and may frequently therefore be picked up second-hand at Italian goldsmiths.

The temptation, often irresistible to the very guardians of the deposit, to rob the sepulchre of the buried treasure, was sometimes obviated, as was done by the Etruscans of old, by the substitution of imitative jewels for the true. To quote again from the Loan Collection. "No. 7198. Gilt *bronze* ring; the projecting chased bezel contains a quadrangular glass paste in imitation of a sapphire. Found on repairing the choir (Winchester) under the tomb of William Rufus; and supposed to have been the episcopal ring of Henri de Blois, his kinsman, and Bishop of Winchester." The same motive has appeared to some to account for the existence of those monster rings in gilt bronze, not unfrequently seen in cabinets of antiques, bearing on the shoulders the arms or the title of a pope or bishop. None so

authenticated are known of an earlier date than the fifteenth century, which led to the supposition that the practice of tomb-robbing had, by that time, in Italy, run to such a height as to render it a matter of necessity to deposit with the deceased only the counterfeit insignia of his former station. That these curious memorials are actually sometimes discovered in the sepulchres of the popes, appears from the words of Palatin (iii. 653): "A. S. 1607. In sepulchro Sixti IV. repertus est annulus Pauli II., cum hac nota, PAVLVS II."\* Again, in the Macdonald Collection, sold at Sotheby's, April, 1857, No. 9 is described as "a large ring in gilt bronze, set with amethyst, with raised figures in high relief, and finely chased. It formerly belonged to Pope Boniface, from whose tomb it was taken during the popular insurrection at Rome, 1849."

This is the place to give a particular description of these monsters of Dactyliology, that may serve to direct the attention of antiquaries to any allusion to their use made by mediæval writers, or to the real circumstances under which they may turn up in the present day. They are of vast dimensions, evidently not intended for wear, for the weight of some must be near a pound, like the two grandest examples of the class to be seen in the Galleria, Florence. The form is usually the same in all, the shank being four-sided, the head a square set with a *table* of blue paste, or more commonly with a *doublet* in crystal, originally counterfeiting the sapphire before time had discoloured it. On the one shoulder is the shield of the owner, on the other a religious device, often the emblems of the Evangelists. These decorations are usually carved out in a bold Gothic style. On the shank itself runs the legend: *e.g.*, EPIS. LVGDVN, but for the most part they lack such explanatory adjunct, and rest for identification upon the pontifical coats of arms.

The most plausible conjecture in my opinion as to their origin is

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\* A bronze ring thus inscribed, and authenticated by the quotation in the text, was sold (for seven guineas) in the Roby Collection, at Christie's, May, 1855. But there is not the least ground for believing it the one *Palatin* refers to, which, to deserve notice in his history, *must* have been a valuable one.



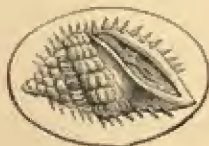
that they were made for symbols of investiture with papal fiefs. This at once explains the smallness of their *real* number, and the fact of more than one being known with the arms of the same pope. For had they been sent to every *bishop* on his consecration, as some will have it, their extant specimens would by this time be infinite; the material being valueless and at the same time imperishable. The base metal may have been adopted by papal sagacity as both more economical and also more showy, from the magnified dimensions of the instrument. That investiture with a fief of the papacy was regularly conferred by the donation of a ring, appears from one very important instance. John of Salisbury (Met. iv. 42) states that he was the bearer of the gold ring set with a very fine *emerald*, through which Pope Adrian invested Henry II. with the dominion of Ireland, in virtue of the grant of Constantine, whereby the possession of all islands was vested in the Holy See. Again, the ceremony that actually makes the Pope, is the putting upon the finger of the elected cardinal the celebrated "Fisherman's Ring." This is a large signet of solid gold roughly cast for the occasion, and having for device St. Peter in a skiff casting his net, the name assumed by the Pontiff-elect being engraved around it.

Another theory, not without something to support it, is that they were credential-rings, serving to authenticate the mission of any one sent on the business of the dignitary whose arms they bear. That the sovereign's signet was occasionally so despatched in very important occasions is well known from many passages in history. For example, Theophylactus (vii. 11) mentions that Mauricius, on the news of the revolt of Phocas, sent his ring after his son Theodorus, whom he had despatched before upon a mission to the court of Persia, entreating his immediate return. The young prince had already got as far as Nicæa, but obeying his father's request, returned to Chalcedon only in time to share his fate, the entire family being massacred that very morning. This hypothesis would, equally with the first stated, account for the known existence in duplicate of these rings, a fact in itself overthrowing the notion that they are mere mortuary decorations. Besides this, some few of the same character have an unmistakably regal source.

One lately seen by me, and the antiquity of which is beyond all cavil, bears on one side the fleur-de-lys, on the other the crown of France, of a pattern bespeaking the fifteenth century. Another has been published, of a very simple form, set with a square crystal, and inscribed ROGERII REGIS, which consequently (if genuine) must be the most ancient in the series, being prior to the year 1154, the date of that king's demise. It is however inexplicable why these puzzling insignia should have so generally belonged to ecclesiastics of various grades.

But what adds to the uncertainty of the question, is the fact that these rings are now forged to a great extent at Frankfort and Paris, as well as all other seals and rings mediæval. The high prices they command from collectors of the works of the Middle Ages, is a strong temptation to their forgery, a very facile one to any skilful brass-founder. All objects therefore of the class, however well supported by the dealer's warranty of place and time of discovery, require to be examined by the amateur with a very suspicious and critical eye.

As for the romance of the subject, nothing of the sort is comparable to the story of Pope Boniface's enchanted ring, as told by his enemy Philippe le Bel, in the '*La vie état et condition du pape Maléface, racontés par des gens dignes de foi.*' . . . "Le 10 Octobre (1303), comme ses amis lui contaient ce qui s'était et l'avertissaient de songer à son âme, lui enveloppé du démon, fuiceux et grinçant des dents, il se jetait sur le prêtre comme le devorer. Le prêtre s'enfuit à toute jambe jusqu' à l'église. Puis sans mor dire il se tourne de l'autre côté. Comme on le portait à sa chaise on le vit jéter les yeux sur la pierre de son anneau, el s'écrier, O vous, malins esprits enfermés dans cette pierre, vous qui m'avez seduit pourquoi m' abandonner vous maintenant? Et il jeta au loin son anneau."







## BULLÆ.

A BULL is the impression of a seal in metal, generally lead, and attached by a string to the document it authenticates. It takes its name from its resemblance in form and appearance to the embossed gold disk worn round the neck by Roman children up to the time of assuming the *toga virilis*. This mode of sealing deeds was no more than a revival (undesigning no doubt) of the primitive Assyrian fashion, by which seals, only in a different material, clay, were similarly appended to documents.

Such metal bullæ, struck as required from a double die like a coin, began to replace the general Roman usage, of sealing with a signet ring on soft wax, about the time of Justinian. Of this emperor there is preserved a bulla presenting his name in three lines; reverse, the same in a complicated monogram. This method was speedily adopted by the popes, for we find one of Dens-dedit A.D. 615: obv. DEVS-DEDIT PAPÆ; reverse, a man standing between a lion and a lamb, a hand on the head of each, above in the field,  $\Lambda \omega$ . The Byzantine emperors, and the German, following their example, appended to their very important documents the noted "Golden Bulls." As may naturally be

supposed, very few of these precious seals have been preserved to our times. Those extant, with the legend in Greek, belong to Manuel Comnennus, Andronicus II., and John Palæologus; in Slavonic, to Andronicus II. and John Callimachus. The last four are in the archives of Mount Athos, which also possess some golden bulls of the Bulgarian Tzars. A *silver* bull is extant of Michael VIII.\*

The practice of the Italian *dogana* to affix a leaden stamp, *bollo*, to packages *in transitu*, dates from the times of the Roman Empire. At the station Brough on the Picts' Wall, and for some inexplicable cause only there in Britain, have been turned up, from time immemorial, an incredible quantity of such *bolli*, leaden disks, somewhat less than a shilling, having on one side the officer's name in a contracted form, or the impression of his signet, often a gem, applied upon the metal whilst yet fused. It is evident that the lead was cast in a matrix bearing the first-named legend, and thus enveloped the string, previously wetted to prevent combustion; and then, when just at cooling point, the official pressed his own signet on the surface. A dangerous ordeal for a sard, but probably less likely to damage a red jasper, the commonest signet-stone under the Lower Empire.

But to return to Byzantine practice. The emperor used a bull in wax for letters to his family and personal friends, in lead for those to the feudatories and high officials. The Patriarch of Constantinople speedily arrogated to himself the latter badge of sovereignty. The bull of Germanus bore on one side the Virgin and Child, on the other that patriarch's name and title. Of the papal bulls in lead, as might be expected, large numbers are in existence. They are about two inches in diameter, having for obverse heads of SS. Peter and Paul; reverse, the name of the pope issuing the document, which, indeed, by an obvious transition, has now usurped the name of its *seal*. The last is only appended to parchments of primary importance; the lesser rescripts of the pontiff, styled "briefs," are merely sealed with the

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\* For full information on this subject see Sabatier's admirable dissertation: "Plombs, Bulles, et Scéaux Byzantins," 'Révue Archéologique,' An. xiv.



"Fisherman's Ring." The privilege of using the leaden bull belonged to but one European temporal prince, the Doge of Venice, to whom it was conceded by Pope Alexander, as a mark of gratitude for the services of that Republic against the German Emperor, Frederic Barbarossa.

The *Jerusalem Rings*, still sold in the Holy City, and commonly brought away by pilgrims in token of vows fulfilled, go back to a date beyond all record. One in silver lately came under my notice, of such antique form and workmanship, that we might fearlessly assign it to the times of the Latin kingdom. These earliest specimens bear only the Holy Sepulchre engraved roughly but boldly in the metal, with the name of the City in Hebrew letters at the side. But the modern, more suited to the opulence of present visitors, are of gold, and have a shield charged with a much more ambitious device. Its *quarters* bear respectively the Holy Sepulchre, the Mosque of Omar, the Cross of Jerusalem, and the Hebrew name. Others again have their shield charged with a large Jerusalem Cross, the *cantons* filled with four of proportionate size. Our curiosity dealers, always equal to the occasion, by a happy confusion of Roman and Gothic usages, designate these as the "knightly rings" of the Templars of old, and thereby extort prices commensurate with the interest of such memorials.





## GIMMEL RINGS.

BEFORE dismissing the subject of credentials, some notice is due to a curious jewel of the same nature, the *gimmel ring*, so often alluded to by our early poets, which united the characters of the credential and the token of plighted love. The name is a corruption of "*Jumelle*," *twin*, the ring when complete being formed out of two flat hoops, the one fitting accurately within the other, and kept in its place by corresponding projections in either external edge, so that the two form to all appearance one body. On each is engraved a name, or often one line of a distich in old French, in an amatory strain.\* These two hoops could be separated, and worn singly, and thus be used as a means of recognition when again compared together. The dénouement of Dryden's '*Don Sebastian*,' turns upon a love-token of the kind:—

"These rings when you were born and thought another's,  
Your parents, glowing yet in sinful love,  
Bade me bespeak : a curious artist wrought them,  
With joints so close as not to be perceived ;  
Yet are they both each other's counterpart.

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\* Shakespeare's "*posy in a ring*," a synonym for something utterly trite and common-place.



His part had *Juan* inscribed, and hers had *Zayda*—  
 You know these names are theirs—and in the midst  
 A heart divided in two halves was placed.  
 Now if the rivets of these rings inclosed  
 Fit not each other, I have forged this lie;  
 But if they do, you must for ever part."

What mediæval relic equals in interest that one in the Waterton Collection, supposed, on the best possible grounds, to be the wedding ring of either Cola di Rienzi, Tribune of Rome, or that of his wife, or at least to have been worn for an ornament by one of them? It is a silver ring with octagonal bezel, bearing on its edge two names, and as is usual in Italian work of the period, the letters are left in relief, the sunken field being filled up with niello. These names are CATERINA NICOLA. The centre is charged with two stars parted by a *bar* heraldic. The *star* is the well-known device assumed by the proud plebeian, who had no armorial bearings of his own, neither did any belong to his wife, Caterina di Rasselli, who therefore assumes the cognisance of her husband: hence the pair of stars. It is on record that Rienzi, on entering upon his Tribuneship, wrote to the Gonfaloniere of Florence (then the seat of art) to send him expert die-sinkers and goldsmiths. To one of these this work may be assigned, for the shapes of the letter *x* and the star correspond with those upon the mintage directed by these very artificers.

Of great value to the history of mediæval glyptic art is a ring in the Marlborough Cabinet, there being the best-grounded reason for pronouncing it the privy-signet of Charles le Sage, King of France, thus described in the Inventory drawn up in 1379: "Le Signet du roy, qui est de la teste d'un roy sans barbe; et est d'un fin rubis d'Orient: c'est celui de quoi le roy scelle les lettres escriptes de sa main." The head in front face is deeply engraved in a fine spinel-ruby, surrounded by the legend on the setting, *tel il nest*, "None is like unto him," and the ring itself (figured at the head of this chapter) is a tasteful example of the style then prevailing, and of itself strongly supports my attribution. This sovereign, after healing the wounds of France inflicted in the Edwardian invasions, was a zealous

promoter of literature and the arts, especially the ornamental. The intaglio may possibly be due to that Peruzzi of Florence, noticed by Ammirati as "singolare intagliatore di pietre," and who employed his skill at that very time in forging the seal of Charles's cousin, Carlo di Durazzo.

St. Louis' signet (now in the Louvre) was long kept for a holy relic in the Trésor de S. Denys, but on a false attribution. The king's figure is shown in front face, at three-quarters length, in a loose surcoat without sleeves, his arms covered with defences of *plate*: he is *beardless* and has long hair. These particulars of costume fully suffice to prove the engraving long posterior to the times of St. Louis, when chain-mail and beards were exclusively the fashion. Besides all this, the figure rests upon a *Crescent*, which symbol Chiflet naturally enough interprets as referring to the Crusade, in which the warrior-saint lost his life. But this explanation is upset by the fact that the Crescent was not taken by the Turks for their national cognizance before they had captured Byzantium, to which city it had pertained from time immemorial. The Saracens of Egypt, against whom S. Louis fought, had no such national banner. This again shows the intaglio to belong to the Renaissance, when the Turkish Empire had become the sole representative of Mahommedanism to the Christian powers. There can be little doubt for assigning the portrait to Louis XII., who was perpetually promising a new Crusade, as a pretext for extorting contributions from his clergy; and who, besides, is known to have had other portraits of himself executed in precious stones done to his order, as the ruby-cameo in the Royal Cabinet. This remarkable gem is very accurately figured by Chiflet, 'Anastasis Childerici,' p. 96.







## DIE-SINKERS AND GEM-ENGRAVERS.

THAT the dies for the Greek and the Roman coinage were cut by the artists who engraved the gems of the same period, is manifest from the identity of treatment and *technique* observable in the figures, and the portraits common to both classes. Some remarkable instances of this conformity have come under my own notice. A sard (Praun) bears a cow *regardant*, in the same peculiar drawing as the type (which might easily pass for an antelope) upon the well-known didrachm of Sybaris, and similarly enclosed within the Etruscan border. Another sard, the figure of *Abundantia*, was the exact counterpart, even to the minutest details, of the reverse of a denarius of Hadrian's, both formerly in my possession. A third (Praun), with the head of Commodus, was the facsimile of the die that struck a denarius of his, also known to me. Again, on examining the figures of Minerva in gems, so plentifully turned up in the environs of Rome, the identity of their treatment with that of the same goddess upon the mintage of her special devotee, Domitian, cannot but arrest the attention of the numismatist.

In some very exceptional cases (probably *trial-pieces*) in the Greek series, the die-sinker has put his signature upon his work, thus :

NETANTOS ΕΠΟΙΕΙ, on a medal of Cydonia, and ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΕΙ on another of Clazomenæ. On some of the fine coins of Magna Græcia, notably on those of Velia and Syracuse,\* names may often be discovered engraved in minute characters upon the *accessories* (the helmet usually) of the principal type, which on that account have always been regarded as the signatures of the artists. It is, however, my conviction, founded upon a careful review of the circumstances; that such names, unless where followed by the declarative ΕΠΟΙΕΙ, *cannot* denote the die-sinker, but the mint-master, the *Ταμίης*, who was responsible for the goodness of that particular issue,† and who for that very reason, in other states, somewhat later—Rhodes and Athens for example—put his name at full length upon the reverse. Now in all cases when the mint-master's name is thus broadly set forth, these supposed minute *signatures* are not to be found, a tolerably convincing proof that both modes had one and the same object. Lastly, in that largest currency of Greece, after the Athenian, the later didrachms of Corinth, the same purpose may reasonably be conjectured to have been carried out by the subordinate figure occurring in endless variety in the field of the obverse, which if allowed to be the type borne in the signet-ring of the actual mint-master (which same seal-device was invariable, and known to all), was, in its most literal sense, the *signature* of that officer.‡

No names that can be supposed those of the engravers present themselves in the Roman mintage, where such a distinction would naturally not have been conceded to the die-sinkers, now merely the slaves or freedmen of the Quæstor, or Triumvir Monetalis. I cannot, how-

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\* "Cleodorus" on the frontlet of Minerva's helmet, and similarly "Philistion," Velia; "Exæcestidas," Camarina; "Euclidas," "Cimon," "Eucenctus," and "Phrygillus," all of Syracuse. Poole attributes the marked mannerism of the heads on the medallions of Syracuse to the predominant cultivation of gem-engraving in Sicily, and the corresponding neglect of Sculpture and Painting.

† On the Syracusan Medallion this name is followed by ΑΘΑΑ, "The Prize," in the same *microscopic* lettering, a plain proof that it referred to the official who was concerned in either supplying or assigning the money proposed for the victor.

‡ In the Heracleian Inscription each of the magistrates signing it states what was the device of his own signet—a vine leaf, a winnowing fan, &c.



ever, help suspecting the existence of an ingenious device due to Greek taste, for eternizing the poor artist's ignoble name upon the memorials on his patrician masters.\* This seems to have been aimed at through the symbols so frequently introduced into the field of the denarii—on those of the families Papia and Roscia in a remarkable degree. It will be found, on examination, that the symbol on the obverse has always a direct connection with that on the reverse; thus, on a coin of the Papia, the one is the petasus, the other the harpè of Perseus; on another, two horns conjoined into a crescent, and a garland—both established Bacchic insignia. So significant are these adjuncts, that they irresistibly point to Perseus and Dionysius, as the names of persons who inserted them under this modest disguise. A strong confirmation of my theory is supplied by the fact recorded by Pliny of Sauros and Batrachos, the sculptors, introducing the *rebus* of their appellations, the *lizard* † and the *frog*, in the capitals of the columns of the portico of Octavia, which they built for Augustus, where these figures are still to be seen. Their date is but shortly posterior to the cessation of the issue of the consular series; and, by a singular coincidence, the lizard with its *antithesis*, the crane, occurs in the list of the marks above noticed. Similar practical *metonomasie* occasionally show themselves upon Greek regal coins; for instance, a *Demeter* on those of a *Demetrius*; and yet more to our purpose, the Mysian sun-god, *Phanaces*, upon the gold medallion of the Pontic *Pharnaces II.*

On certain consular mintages these twin symbols appear in a wonderful diversity, and like the numerals that take their place upon others (*e.g.*, the *Bæbia*), they plainly declare the enormous number of

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\* The last of the royal line of Macedon may possibly have got his living at Rome by taking up this profession, for Plutarch mentions a tradition that he was "ingenious in chasing and in doing minute work" (*τορνεύειν καὶ λεπτοεργεῖν*), although he does not specify the exact nature of the latter trade.

† This love of the Romans for the *rebus*, fully as strong as that of the fourteenth century English, cannot be better exemplified than by Cicero's dedicating in a Sicilian temple (when questor there) a silver bowl inscribed *M. TVLLIVS*, followed by the figure of a *cicer* or chick-pea.

coin-dies used up in the issue of the silver currency during the year the questor of the particular *nomen* was in office as Master of the Mint. And this leads us to another question, how the ancient coin-dies were multiplied with sufficient facility to meet the requirements of an extended commerce employing exclusively a silver currency, which last actually in the case of Athens formed itself an article of exportation, and a profitable one, a circumstance plainly indicative of the small cost to the state of its minting. The difficulties of the problem are much increased when we come to consider the high relief of the very commonest pieces, the tetradrachms of Athens and of Alexander, to say nothing of those exceptional issues of yet larger *module*, like the Syracusan medallion, a decadrachm. And it must be remembered that at the present day, to prepare the die for a crown-piece, little larger than a tetradrachm, is the work of six months. The modern expedient of cutting the design in relief on a steel punch, which in its turn serves to impress any required number of matrices for the actual striking of the coins, was unknown to the ancients,\* as is conclusively demonstrated by the fact that no two coins are ever found exactly alike, though belonging to the same mintage and same year, another proof of the vast number of different dies successively consumed in one single issue. Pistrucci in his latter days made a great boast of having discovered the secret of the Greek moneyers, by obtaining a *cast*† matrix directly from the wax model; and certainly there is a soft and flowing contour in the types of the larger medals of those ages that seems difficult to be ascribed to a die *cut* in hard metal. Again, to have engraved by hand the dies sufficient for the coinage of such mints as Athens, Corinth, Syracuse, Velia, which still exists in unlimited abundance—not to speak of that of Alexander in both metals, which became the currency of the whole civilized world—and when we consider the constant breakage of the dies, so tedious a method of multiplying the matrices must have employed such a host of

\* In fact Cellini ('Orificeria') claims the merit of the invention as his own; which assumption, whether true or not, proves it to belong to his times.

† The very fusible alloy of the three dies for denarii of Augustus, described by Caylus (i. 285), to be mentioned further on, strongly supports this idea.



die-sinkers, and such an amount of artistic talent in each individual, as is scarcely credible that even Greece in her most flourishing times could have so continuously supplied.

The dies in mixed metal, of which a few very rare\* examples are preserved, such as that for the reverse of the gold octrodrachm of Berenice (Mayer Collection), and another for the obverse of a denarius of Augustus found at Nismes (with a fellow), and published by Caylus (I. pl. 105), only serve to increase the difficulty of the question. How dies in this soft composition† were able to resist the repeated blows of the heavy hammer requisite to bring up the impression on the *blank* is quite a mystery, even though they were fortified‡ in the skilful way to be noticed further on. A favourite notion with numismatists is that the *blanks*, in the form of bullets, were made red hot, and so far plastic, before putting between the dies; which supposition indeed explains the appearance of the *longs* amongst the moneyer's instruments on the well-known medal of Carisius. It is said, and by practical people, that pure gold or silver thus heated will yield to impact as readily as pewter itself. The only objection is that the perpetual contact with the heated blanks must have equally tended to soften the somewhat fusible composition of the dies themselves. The whole subject has derived some light from a recent discovery (1862) of the most authentic as well as interesting relic of the class anywhere mentioned.§ A peasant picked up in the fields near Avrenches (Aven-ticum) the obverse die for the largest Gallic gold, engraved with a rude head of Apollo, a close copy by a barbarian hand of Philip's stater. It is a disk, very concave, of a hard and whitish bronze, and

\* It is evident that uncommon care was taken in the mints to destroy the dies as fast as they wore out, to prevent their falling into improper hands.

† Caylus notes that the companion die to his, when tried in the coining-press, flew into fragments. The metal was a composition of copper, zinc, tin, and lead, in equal parts—an alloy easily fusible.

‡ These with a third, also of Augustus, then in the Cabinet of Ste. Genevieve, were conical, about 1½ inch high, and 1 inch diameter at the base. Their form at once indicated to that acute antiquary that they were intended for insertion into a casing (*mandrin*) of other metal.

§ Figured in the 'Arch. Journal,' xix. p. 255.

has been tooled up with a graver, leaving lines of one thickness. To prevent the yielding of the metal under the hammer, it was sunk in a short cylinder of *iron*, being let into a bed therein, and the edges of the cavity carefully beaten over so as to secure it in its place. The lowness of the cylinder shows that this die was the "standard," *i.e.*, the one placed undermost in striking, which was always the most important of the two, as this position insured greater steadiness and consequently a better impression of the type. The reverse was cut upon a long punch intended to be held in the left hand,\* and receive the blows of the hammer. The dished surface of the lowermost die fitted the globular blank, and assisted in preventing its slipping.

Under the Lower Empire *iron* came into use as the general material for dies, which may serve to account for the flat relief of the coins of the period. The perishable nature of the metal has not allowed any of this kind to come down to our times, except the pair for a medal of Constantius, now in the Bibliothèque Impériale, Paris.†

Nothing of the kind, however, can be compared for interest and completeness to the dies for the silver of the gens Cornelia, discovered in the South of France, and lately acquired by the British Museum. Here, too, as in the Helvetic example, the actual dies are small disks of *white* bronze let into iron cylinders, but with the addition of an ingenious arrangement calculated to insure steadiness in the striking of the blank. The standard a massy cylinder, about four inches deep by three in diameter, has a sunken circular socket half an inch deep on the surface, at the bottom the obverse die is embedded flush: one quarter of this reserved rim is cut down to facilitate the extraction of the coin after striking. The other part (the puncheon), twice the length of the standard, has exactly the same diameter as the sunken cavity upon

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\* In the most ancient coinages this punch bore no type at all, but merely had its surface roughly indented, or sometimes cut with a cross; its sole object being to force the blank into the *incavo* of the standard.

† From their shape the dies got the technical name of *cuneus*, the regular term in Low Latin, whence came the Italian *coinio*, and our *coin*. Louis le Debonaire puts a pair, with hammer, on the reverse of a denier. The mode of using them is well shown in an old drawing published by Knight in his 'London,' iil., p. 48.



the face of the latter, and has the reverse die embedded in its end, now left *plane*. Thus, when fitted into the cavity upon the blank, it is obvious that no force of the hammer could cause any lateral slipping of the dies—the grand objection to that primitive method of mintage. A similar arrangement is observable in a pair of dies for the shillings of James I.,\* found concealed in the chimney of a cottage at Knaresborough some years ago, only in this case the socket and the tenon were square, not round.

The die-sinker and the goldsmith combined their highest skill to produce the matchless seal-ring of Charles I. (now in the Royal Cabinet). This marvellous specimen of metal-work bears his arms emblazoned with exquisite minuteness upon a shield of *steel*, with the lion and the unicorn in full relief, chiselled out of the same obdurate metal, reclining as supporters to the shield upon the shoulders of a ring of gold, and that of no inconvenient dimensions for wearing on the little finger. There is something in the engraving of the *quarterings* that strongly reminds the numismatist of the work in similar cases of the inimitable Thomas Simon, who is known to have commenced his career as a seal-engraver. The credit of the jewel may however be disputed by the already mentioned Vanderdoort, who was both sculptor and die-sinker, as is proved by a warrant dated April 2, 1625 (published by Walpole), commanding him to make patterns for his Majesty's coins.

\* Figured in the 'Numismatic Chronicle.'





## GEM-ENGRAVERS.

THE names of gem-engravers recorded by ancient writers are astonishingly few in number, when we reflect upon the high estimation in which their productions were held, and the importance of the objects they subserved. Of these artists the earliest on record is Mnesarchus, only illustrious as being the father of Pythagoras; Nausias of Athens, a contemporary of the orator Lysias; Pyrgoteles, "engraver in ordinary" to Alexander; Apollonides and Cronius, of uncertain date; Satyreius, who flourished under Ptolemy II.; Tryphon, under King Polemo, the *protégé* of M. Antony; and lastly, Dioscorides, who worked for Augustus.\*

This scanty list, however, was swollen to a most goodly roll-call by the fancy of the archæologists of the last century, who detected the engraver's own signature in every name that showed itself upon a fine work, provided only it were in Greek characters, and in a somewhat smaller lettering than ordinary. Forgery taking advantage of this preconception of the collector, speedily augmented the number of these

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\* The subject of Ancient Engravers, and the authenticity of their supposed signatures, will be found fully discussed in my 'Handbook.'



signed masterpieces, by inserting on gems, both antique and new made, the names of all the engravers, silver-chasers, and even painters, mentioned in Pliny's catalogue of artists.

These pretensions at last were carried to such a height as to provoke the indignation of Köhler, an archæologist of great experience, domiciled at St. Petersburg, under the patronage of Catherine II. He therefore in an elaborate essay passes the whole list of engravers and their reputed works in review, and by a somewhat too sweeping judgment reduces their number to the small sum of five; viz., Athenion, Apollonius, Evodus, Protarchus, Epitynchanus; allowing even to these the existence of but one genuine work in each case.

In our day Dr. Brunn has, after a very critical examination of the evidence, added to these approved five a few more masters whose claims to the honour he deems equally unquestionable. These are, Agathopus, Aspasius, Boëthus, Dioscorides, his son Eutyches, Evodus, Herophilus, Heraclidas, Hyllus, Felix, Koinos, Myron, Nisus, Nicander, Onesas, Solon, Teucer. To whom I am now enabled to add the most ancient and most authentic of them all, "Dexamenos the Chian," who thus signs at full length his national emblem, the flying stork (*Pelasgos*), upon his noble scarabeoid, discovered at Kertch, and now one of the chief treasures of the Russian Imperial Cabinet; and his own portrait recently found at Athens.

In all these also, with the rarest exceptions, the only authentic signatures are preserved by single specimens. And what in my opinion dangerously shakes the stability of Dr. Brunn's hypothesis—the sole trustworthy evidence, the memorial of the artist-hand, ΕΠΟΙΕΙ, is absent in more than half the number. The other names, occurring as they do in the genitive, can only be distinguished from those of the owners by the adoption of certain arbitrary rules, the validity of which is very open to dispute. These names also, it must not be forgotten, have been largely borrowed by the falsifiers of the last century, on the strength of the celebrity of the pieces which have transmitted them down to us. Finally the very signatures, whose antiquity is the most clearly established as occurring upon *camei*, of Athenion, Boëthus, Protarchus,

have so remarkable a conformity with those of celebrated chasers and painters of the Grecian period, as to lead to the well-grounded suspicion that these camei are Roman reproductions in miniature of masterpieces in other materials by the artists whose names they offer. But whatever be the limit of our belief, every experienced amateur is at last forced to confess that the converse law to that of Bracci and Clarac is now fully established, and that "signed" works of the ancient gem-engraver, instead of being the rule, are the rarest of all imaginable exceptions.

It must not, however, be imagined that all names written in Greek upon gems are fraudulent modern insertions: on the contrary, genuine examples occur in abundance. Indeed their large number makes it probable that under the Empire Greek professionals, particularly the medical, placed their names conspicuously on their signets as a matter of course. The types these signatures accompany, support my view of the character of the persons to whom they belonged. Examples of such, from my own knowledge, are given in my illustrations: the advertisements (in modern phrase) of Anthimus, Herophilus, and Dionysius of Smyrna.

The "trade" motive here assigned serves to explain the absence of signatures on the signets of persons of higher rank, the patrons of these professionals. We never find on the masterpieces of art the names of the Cæsar or the patrician whose property their very excellence assures us they have been. Of such personages the signets were sufficiently known from their devices to all whom it then concerned: the addition of their names was a thing beneath their dignity.

One source of information on the subject of engravers' names, from which much, and that the most authentic, might naturally have been expected, viz., monumental inscriptions mentioning the profession of the deceased, entirely fails us in consequence of the merging of the "sculptor gemmarius" into the comprehensive "aurifex" and "cælator." For the ancient *aurifex*, like his counterpart the *orafo* of Florence and Milan's palmy days, combined all three trades in one, and often



sculpture into the bargain. The varied and extensive character of his occupation may be deduced from the description Manilius gives of it, where he paints the influence of the several constellations upon the tastes and fortunes of mankind (v. 500):—

“ When now Cassiope upon the right,  
 Twice twelve degrees accomplished, gilds the night,  
 She gives the goldsmith's art new forms to mould,  
 And add fresh value to the precious gold.  
 To paint the metal with the jewel's blaze,  
 Or gilded ceilings o'er the shrine to raise ;  
 Or in his dome, above the Thunderer's head,  
 Of gold and gems a richer heaven to spread.  
 A splendour this first to the gods assigned,  
 Usurped by luxury *now*, both vain and blind ;  
 Our banquet halls with temples now compete,  
 And under golden roofs off gold we eat.  
 Their works our holiest sanctuaries grace  
 In trophies stamped with Mithridates' face ;  
 Here flaming gold with Sol's own radiance vies,  
 And Indian fires from sparkling gems arise.  
 Here treasures rare, from Eastern monarchs torn,  
 Are stored ; in Pompey's Asian triumph borne.  
 Now, like the sea, dire luxury's swelling tide  
 Invades the land, and spreads the ruin wide.  
 Rages the pest unchecked ; still rush the flames,  
 And still new conquests the enchantress claims.  
 Hence with augmented charms doth beauty glow,  
 And gold adds lustre to the dazzling brow ;  
 Gems load the hair, gems load the neck and hands,  
 And snowy feet are clasped in jewelled bands.  
 Why should the dame in useless splendour joy,  
 Decked in her fortune, like some glittering toy ?  
 And, lest for folly's use materials fail,  
 She drives to his hard task the miner pale ;  
 Bids in earth's bowels seek the golden ore,  
 And plunder Nature of her hoarded store ;  
 Seeks upside down to turn the groaning lands,  
 To seize the ingots lurking in their sands :  
 Deep in the abyss to pounce upon her prey,  
 And drag the unwilling captive forth to day.  
 With greedy eye he marks the sparkling gleam,  
 Leads o'er the glistening sands the cleansing stream ;  
 Of its rich load the foaming torrent strains,  
 And by a dam the precious dust detains.  
 With longing gaze bent on the eddying stream,  
 He burns to clutch the flakes that brightly gleam.

The silver ore he melts, his furnace glows,  
From the black stone the lustrous metal flows.  
The ingot cast the craftier dealer bears,  
Changes his toil, and for his profit cares.  
Such are the tastes, and such the various arts,  
That to the child Cassiope imparts."







## MODERN GEM-ENGRAVERS.

THE earliest notice of the existence of the Glyptic art in Italy (and that even before the first dawn of the Revival) is to be found in Scipione Ammirati's *Florentine History* (xiv. p. 741), where he records that a certain Peruzzi of Florence, "*singolare intagliatore di pietre*," counterfeited the seal of Carlo di Durazzo, in 1379. But this is all that is known of him, neither are any other names quoted of persons distinguished in the art for the whole of the century following, until Camillo di Leonardo, in his '*Speculum Lapidum*,' written in 1502, gives a brief but valuable notice of the earliest artists of the Italian Revival, and who, from the date of his treatise, must necessarily be reckoned in the Quattro-cento period.

Nevertheless, although so short a space had elapsed since the restoration of the art, Camillo speaks of their works as "diffused all over Italy, and not to be distinguished from the antique"—affirming that the following engravers, his own contemporaries, were equal in merit to any of ancient times. At Rome, Giovanni Maria da Mantova; at Venice, Francesco Nichini da Ferrara; at Genoa, Jacopo Tagliacarne; at Milan, Leonardo da Milano—"Who sink figures in gems with such

accuracy and neatness, that nothing can be added to or taken away therefrom." He adds that an art then flourished altogether unknown to the ancients, that of *niellatura*, in which he praises as the most distinguished worker, Giovanni, surnamed Frazza, of Bologna.

Vasari has not condescended to notice any of these four celebrities of the age preceding his own, either because their works were by the fastidious taste of the times condemned as rude and barbarous first attempts; or, probably, because the authors of them were not *Tuscans*, but mere Lombards and Genoese. His 'History of the Painters' gives, however, copious details respecting the chief contemporary engravers down to the year 1567, and the following notices are in great measure condensed exclusively from his accounts, in the total absence of other materials.

*Giovanni*, styled *delle Carniole*, "of the carnelians," from his practice of engraving in that stone, is the first artist in this line whose name is recorded by Vasari. He was a young Florentine, who learnt the art\* from "masters of different countries" summoned to Florence by Lorenzo, and his son, Piero dei Medici, to *repair or restore* (*rassettare*) the ancient gems they had collected. Hence he must have gained his reputation before 1492, the date of Lorenzo's death. Giovanni got his title, says Vasari, "because he engraved carnelians most excellently, to which fact an *infinite* number bear testimony, that are to be seen from his hand, both large and small." His masterpiece, "which was a most extraordinary intaglio," the head of *Fra Savonarola*, is still in the cabinet of the Uffizi, Florence. It is very deeply cut in a large carnelian, two inches in diameter: around runs the legend HIERONYMVS FERRARIENSIS ORD. PRAED. PROPHETA. VIR. ET. MARTYR. Riccio (writing in 1597) mentions that the Grand Duke Francesco I. used to show it as one of the greatest rarities in his treasury of art. The Marchese Capponi had an exact replica of this, now in the museum of the Collegio Romano. The Marmi family again were in possession of the same

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\* "Imparò da questi (maestri di diversi paesi) per mezzo del Magnifico Lorenzo questa virtù di intaglio in cavo un giovane Fiorentino chiamato Giovanni delle corniole. ('Vita di Valerio Vicentino.')



head, but in cameo, on a calcedony-agate, somewhat larger than the famous intaglio, set in a silver frame with chain, which was offered for sale to Gori, but at too exorbitant a price ('Hist. Glypt.'). There can be little doubt that this was the very cameo in the (late) Uzielli Collection, most of the camei it contained having been only recently obtained in different Italian cities. It was a head covered with a cowl, in flat relief, upon an agate-onyx, in white on a transparent ground. The work had every appearance of belonging to his times. The newly established art was naturally employed in multiplying portraits of the monkish demagogue, who for four years (1494 to 1498) domineered over Florence. In the (late) Mertens Schaaffhausen Collection, B. 180, was a carnelian, "Bust of a monk, on the right the letter I, on the left S, Gothic form; fine work of the time of the Medici." Supposed by the maker of the catalogue to be a head of Savonarola; but more probably that of some German clerical celebrity, for the *barbarian* Gothic letter had gone out of use at Florence long before Savonarola's age; and what is more, the I cannot stand for the initial of *Hieronymus*,\* but of some Johannes or Josephus.

*Domenico Compagni*, surnamed *dei Camei*, flourishing about the same time at Milan, was made famous by engraving the head of the last duke, Lodovico il Moro, in intaglio ("*in cavo*"), on a balais ruby, the size of a giulio, (our shilling); "which," remarks Vasari, "was an extraordinary thing, and one of the best intagli ever seen from a modern artist." The circumstance that Domenico obtained his appellation from his special excellence in works in *cameo*, adds to the probability that the ruby in her Majesty's collection, with the head of Louis XII., the conqueror of Milan, *in relief*, comes from his hand. In the French collection are also two camei which Chabouillet ascribes to this engraver; viz., No. 322, a bust in profile in the costume of Louis XII.'s age, which formerly passed for that of Lodovico il Moro himself, but now, on the authority of other portraits, is supposed to represent Louis, Marquis de Saluces; and No. 323, which formerly was

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\* Or even its Italian form, that being *Girolamo*.

taken to be Louis XII., but is now restored to its true original, Charles d'Amboise, Governor of Milan in 1501. It is a bust in three-quarter face, wearing a medal. Both these camei are in agate-onyx.

The *Leonardo da Milano*, extolled by Camillo, is supposed by Mariette to be L. da Vinci, who besides goldsmith's work may possibly have tried his powers in this (which at the time commonly went with it) branch of art.\* I have seen an enamelled pendant attributed to Da Vinci, and which certainly does bear his usual monogram. Cesare Borgia having appointed him his architect in 1502, L. da Vinci was thus actually brought into contact with the duke's physician, Camillo: besides, he had made Milan his home ever since entering Lodovico's service in 1483, which would explain the designation "Da Milano."

Here I shall anticipate a few years, to remark that a similar exemplar of skill in every branch of art, *Cellini*, must have been a proficient in *this* also, if we are to credit his statement that he *engraved* the zodiac and other heavenly bodies upon the ball of *crystal* supported on the shoulders of the Atlas in gold, on the famous medallion made for Ginori, and so minutely described by the artist. His pre-eminence in the cognate art of die-sinking is a matter of notoriety, and there is now in the possession of an English collector, a fine lapis-lazuli box, formerly belonging to Card. Gonsalvi: on the lid is a good intaglio, a Bacchanalian Scene, signed CELLINI. If this signature be not a subsequent and fraudulent addition, this intaglio would alone establish Cellini's reputation as an experienced gem-engraver. He has, indeed, in his 'Orificeria,' left a minute description of the large official seals in silver, containing numerous figures, made for different cardinals, as being specimens of great perfection in this line, in which sort of work he was much employed during his second residence at Rome. He was also chief engraver to the Papal Mint, and it seems to have been a matter of course in that age, that all artists so distinguished engraved.

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\* In fact Vasari says of him in his youth, when apprenticed to Andrea del Verrocchio: "He studied not only perspective, but all other things into which *design* enters."



gems also. The sole obstacle to this conclusion lies in the fact that our artist himself, ever so profuse in his laudation of all his other works, should have been silent upon this head, if we except the ambiguous allusion already quoted.

*Jacopo Tagliacarne*, of Genoa, is supposed by Mariette to have engraved the numerous portraits of the Genoese nobles which it was the fashion during the Cinque-cento to use for signets. But seeing that he is one of the four particularized by Camillo, and omitted by Vasari, and that his reputation was already established before the date of 1502, his works necessarily belong to the Quattro-cento school, and have nothing in common with these portraits—a theory resting on nothing better than Soprani's conjecture; and, what is a yet stronger objection, portraits or gems can hardly be said to have existed at all before 1500, much less to have been commonly in fashion.

*Pietro Maria da Pescia*, a native of Tuscany, "who by his talent and works brought the art still nearer to perfection," was employed in Rome by Leo X. He was a friend of M. Angelo's, for whom, as the tradition goes, he executed the celebrated signet, the Birth of Bacchus, now one of the most interesting gems of the French cabinet.

*Michelino*, his contemporary, was his rival, and of no less merit, not merely in large, but also in minute works. He was probably a Milanese, for Cellini thus mentions him:—"There was come to Rome (1529) a certain *Michetto*," a very clever man for engraving carnelians, and moreover a jeweller of great experience. He was an old man, and of great reputation, and had got himself made keeper of the two crowns of the Pope." Being advanced in years at this early date, he must have been a contemporary in his younger days of Domenico dei Camei, but the quotation shows that he worked exclusively in intaglio.

*Nicolo Avanzi*, of Verona, flourished at the beginning of the century. Being established in Rome, he worked in carnelians and other fine stones, both in relief and in intaglio. His gems were purchased by

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\* Like Michelino, only a diminutive of Michele. As yet the plebeian Italians had no surnames.

different princes, and one of his best pieces, a Birth of Christ, with many figures, engraved on a lapis-lazuli three fingers (two inches) square, was bought as a great rarity by the Duchess of Urbino. Being of a noble family, he followed his occupation in private. He and Mondella were the masters under whom Matteo del Nassaro studied (Pozzo's 'Lives of the Veronese Painters').

*Matteo dei Benedetti* was in high reputation at the same time at Bologna, and is extolled by Achillini in his '*Viridario*.' The date of his death is 1523.

*Francia*, the painter, goldsmith, and die-sinker of the same city, is also reported to have practised gem-engraving.

*Marco Attio Moretti* had attained celebrity there as early as the year 1493. Achillini praises him; and he is invited by J. B. Pio (1509) to engrave the portrait of his Chloris.

*Foppa*, nicknamed *Caradosso* (Bear's Face), of Milan, and his partner, *Furnius*, of Bologna, in the early years of the century, are placed by Pomponius Gauricus on a level with Pyrgoteles and Dioscorides.

*Severo da Ravenna* is, however, elevated above all his rivals by the same writer, who styles him *sculptor*, *sculptor*, *celator*. He is probably that pupil of Marc. Antonio's who engraved the copper-plates with the monogram S.R.

*Henrich Engelhart*, of Nurnburgh, a friend of A. Durer's, was celebrated for engraving coats of arms in gems.

*Giovanni Bernardi*, better known as *Giovanni del Castel Bolognese*, from his birthplace, first begins the commendable practice of signing his works, in the just consciousness of his own merit. His signatures are variously expressed: IOANNES B—IO. CASTEL BON—IO. C.B., the last the most usual. His first piece of importance was done for Duke Alfonso of Ferrara, in whose service he remained three years: it represented the Assault on the Castle of Bastia, in which affair that prince had been dangerously wounded. Besides a multitude of minor gems, he also engraved the dies for Alfonso's medals. Paulus Jovius, however, persuaded him to go to Rome, where he was patronized by



the Cardinal Ippolito dei Medici and Clement VII. For the latter he executed several medals, highly commended by Cellini himself, as well as numerous gem works. His reputation, however, now rests upon his engravings in plaques of crystal, in which line he possessed an extraordinary facility. Vasari praises as his best performances in this material the following pieces: The Four Evangelists, on four circular plates (*tondi*), done for Clement VII. (a success which obtained for him the patronage of the Cardinals Ippolito dei Medici and Salviati): "The wife of Darius brought to Alexander," for the Cardinal Ippolito: also "the Rape of the Sabines." This prelate, as he was departing for France (whence he never returned), took from his own neck a chain and pendant cameo, valued at six hundred scudi, and presenting it to the artist, bade him retain the same until he should redeem it. This Cardinal Ippolito, son of Giuliano, the third son of the great Lorenzo, was not unworthy of his celebrated grandfather. "Possessed," says Roscoe, "through the partiality of Clement VII., of an immense revenue, he was at once the patron, the companion, and the rival of all the poets, the musicians, and the wits of his day. Without territories, without subjects, Ippolito entertained at Bologna a court far more splendid than that of any Italian potentate."

After Ippolito's death, in 1535, Bernardi entered the service of the Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (second son of Pierluigi), for whom he executed many works in crystal, the principal being those adorning a cross and two candlesticks of silver, presented to the altar of St. Peter's, and still there in Mariette's time (1750). The designs were probably furnished by Perin del Vago, the painter, the subjects being, on the cross, the Crucified Saviour, God the Father above, St. John, the Magdalen, and the Virgin at the sides. For the base, three scenes from the Passion. For the candlesticks, six rounds with scenes from the Nativity. Also the oval panels of a circular silver coffer made for the same patron, the subjects being: the Chase of the Calydonian Boar, a Bacchante, a Naval Battle, Hercules in combat with the Amazons, and other subjects suggested by the Cardinal himself, and drawn for him by Perin del Vago. His next works of note were the

Taking of Goletta, and the Battle of Tunis.\* Afterwards, for the same patron, he did the Birth of Christ, Christ in the Garden, Christ brought before Ananias Herod and Pilate, the Flagellation, the Carrying the Cross, the Nailing, the Elevation of the Cross, the Resurrection. All these pieces were not only of the greatest beauty, but finished with such expedition as to astonish everybody. But his two masterpieces were Tityus, "with the Vulture devouring his heart," as Vasari hath it, in the Strozzi† Cabinet, and the Fall of Phæthon, both done for the Cardinal Ippolito, after M. Angelo's designs. Another much-praised work of his was the portrait of Margaret of Austria, wife of Ottavio Farnese, Duke of Parma, in rivalry of one by Il Vicentino. This, according to Gori, is the cameo formerly in the 'Dactyliothea Smithiana,' and now in the Royal Collection. He died (1555), aged sixty, at Faenza, to which place he had retired upon his fortune.

*Matteo del Nassaro* was born at Verona, the son of a shoemaker—though his surname has somewhat *Arabic* in its sound. His signature has never been ascertained, but the letters O. P. N. S., seen on certain gems in the French collection, are interpreted by Mariette (without much foundation) as *Opus Nassari sculptoris*, and as the only means he took for certifying his work. He had studied under Avanzi and Mondella, the two noted Veronese engravers at Rome. His first work of note was a Deposition from the Cross, in relief, on bloodstone, the design so cleverly managed, that the sanguine spots of the jasper represented the blood dropping from the Saviour's wounds; and which was acquired by Isabella d'Este, Duchess of Mantua. Soon afterwards he entered the service of Francis I., at whose court he was chiefly

\* These crystal plaques are of large dimensions, the compositions are elaborate, containing numerous figures and accessories, of extraordinary finish, though somewhat stiff in drawing; always executed in shallow intaglio, highly polished in the interior. The same observations apply to Il Vicentino's crystals, although his style is rather more free.

† Now Blacas: drawn with incredible power, and where one would recognise the spirit of the mighty Tuscan even without this memorandum of Vasari's. The intaglio, strange to say, is left unpolished internally. It is signed O. P. N. The plaque is oval, about 3 x 2½ inches, mounted in gold for a pendant jewel.



occupied in engraving *camei*, the fashionable ornament of the day for the hat, the neck-chain, or the ring, "there being hardly one nobleman," remarks Vasari, "who did not possess something from his hand."

A head of Dejanira by him was greatly admired. "It was in nearly full relief, cut out of a calcedony found in a *river*,"\* in which the several layers gave the different colours of the flesh, the hair, and the lion's hide drawn over the head—a red streak marking the last made it appear as but recently flayed off. Nassaro also produced many of the large crystal pieces then so greatly in vogue; his best in this line being the figures of all the Planets, and a Venus with Cupid seen from behind—casts of which Vasari had examined at Verona, and preferred to everything else of the sort. For Francis he also executed a portable oratory, adorned with numerous gems, and statuettes, and bas-reliefs, in gold. So high a value did he attach to his own performances, that he gave them away for presents, rather than submit to what he considered too low a remuneration for his labours; nay, once broke to pieces a fine cameo, which a nobleman had refused to accept under such conditions.†

After the battle of Pavia he returned to his native town with the fortune he had made, but was recalled to Paris by Francis, on the recovery of his liberty, who appointed him chief engraver to the mint. To please his patron, he took a wife at Paris, and had by her some children, "but so unlike himself that he got little pleasure from them."

\* Probably the Marne at Champigny, three leagues from Paris, where Pujoux notes that "within the last few years (before 1813) onyx-pebbles had been found of two red layers separated by one of milky-white, and upon which some fine camei were cut."

† The Blacas Cabinet possesses a cameo bust in front-face of Diane de Poitiers, which, from the circumstances, can come from no other hand, and which fully justifies the praises of those that knew him. Nothing antique can surpass the treatment of the nude in this piece, or the delicate texture of the fine drapery covering the bosom without conceding its beautiful contours. The stone is an agate-onyx, about 3 × 2½ inches in size. In the same cabinet are two crystal plaques, the 'Triumph of Neptune,' and the 'Combat of Hercules and Antæus,' done in a much more finished style than their companions by his two great rivals in the same division. Both are unmistakably by one artist, and without signature, a fact that of itself points to Matteo, all the other workers in crystal making it a rule to sign their finished plaques.

His death took place in Paris, shortly after that of the king, in 1547. He trained up many pupils, both Italian and French, of whom the best known were *Domenico Ricci*, *Bruscialorzi*, both of Verona; and two of his own nephews, afterwards established in Flanders. *G. M. Mantovano*, nicknamed *Il Zoppo*, a goldsmith of Verona, was also one of his pupils.

*Valerio dei Belli*, popularly known as *Il Vicentino*, from his native place, is acknowledged universally as the head of the profession in the age in which he lived. He engraved camei and intagli with equal success, but according to the then prevailing taste, his most important works are his crystal plaques. "Had nature," observes Vasari, "given him the same knowledge of drawing as he possessed excellence in the actual engraving, coupled with great industry and patience in working, he would have far surpassed all the ancients in this art. As it was, he had so much taste, that he always availed himself of the designs of others, or of antique intagli in his own works." A fact which accounts for the numerous repetitions of the antique, in Valerio's style, to be met with perpetually in collections.

His signature, VALE. or VA. VI. F., is invariably affixed to his *actual* works; but it is the custom with amateurs and dealers to attribute to him all the large Renaissance crystals, or important portrait camei that exist, without the slightest foundation beyond conjecture.

He also sunk coin-dies, both for modern medals and copies of the antique. Vasari notes those in the latter style for the Twelve Cæsars, besides a multitude in the *Greek* series. Hence he may be counted as one of those who enriched *this* branch of Numismatics with suchlike singular novelties as medals of Dido, Priam, Cleopatra, &c., in First Brass, which sometimes turn up to the astonishment of modern students. His Cæsars, however, with their reverses, are expressly said to have been *copied* from the antique, and were superior to the originals, "piu belle!" Vasari concludes his notice of his works with the praise: "Ha fatto con l'occhio e calla mano miracoli stupendissimi;" which in truth is no more than his due, for the excellence of his crystal plaques that have come under my own notice is truly wonderful, and infinitely



above the peculiar Cinque-cento style characterizing the intagli of other hands.

During the pontificate of Clement VII., before the disastrous sack of Rome in 1528, he was looked upon as the head of the numerous gem-engravers from Milan and other cities, who flourished and swarmed then at Rome, to a degree incredible to later times. This pope paid him six thousand gold scudi for making the crystal coffret, adorned with scenes from the Passion, intended for a present to Francis I., upon their conference at Marseilles, in order to arrange the marriage of the dauphin with the pontiff's niece, Catarina dei Medici. After this, a cross from Valerio's hand, and several "*paci*," *i.e.*, circular disks engraved with the Crucifixion, also in crystal, were dedicated by Clement in S. Lorenzo's, Florence.

Paul III. and the Cardinal Farnese continued to patronise him. For the latter he executed four ovals in crystal, greatly admired, and which were enchased in a silver coffret presented to the Duchess Eleonora of Florence. "He engraved so many other things in crystal, that the whole world and the goldsmiths' shops are full of casts in sulphur and plaster from his engravings, representing histories, single figures, and heads. He had such 'tremendous industry' (*un pratico tanto terribile*), that there never was any one of his profession who has left so many works. The vases he made for Clement, intended to contain the relics at S. Lorenzo's, were of incredible variety in their forms, and cut out of sardonyx, agate, amethyst, carnelian, heliotrope, crystal, jasper, and lapis-lazuli, in beauty and value beyond all that could be desired. For Paul III. he made a cross and two candlesticks in crystal, with the Passion engraved in different compartments; besides an infinity of gems both large and small, too numerous to particularize. Valerio spared no expense in collecting antiques, marbles, casts from the antique, and from modern works, drawings and paintings by famous masters, so that his house at Vicenza is so full of rarities, as to be a perfect wonder (*uno stupore*)."

No engraver was ever either so industrious, or so expeditious, as Valerio, and his works were long employed for models by the Italian

goldsmiths. Having retired to Vicenza with an ample fortune, he nevertheless continued to work at his occupation to the very close of his life in 1546, and down to the age of seventy-eight "he produced with his eyes and his hands the most astonishing prodigies of art." His daughter had been instructed by him in his profession, in which she too attained considerable distinction.

*Marmita*, the elder, of Parma, originally a painter, engraved many gems after the antique.

*Luigi Marmita*, his son, greatly surpassed him, and having entered the service of Card. Salviati, at Rome, "distinguished himself at a period when nothing mediocre would have passed current there." His most famous piece was a cameo, the head of Socrates; but he soon abandoned gem-engraving for the more lucrative business of sinking dies for false antique medals.

*Domenico di Polo*, at Florence, at first a die-sinker, afterwards took to engraving gems. He had been a pupil of *Giovanni delle Corniole*. Vasari styles him "*intagliatore di ruote*," which seems to have been the technical term then for working in intaglio as opposed to cameo-cutting. He flourished about the year 1536, and did many works for the Dukes Alessandro and Cosimo dei Medici.

*Prospero delle Corniole*, got his title from his profession, and must have been a contemporary of *Giovanni's*, but is only incidentally alluded to by Vasari in his notice of his son *Nanni* the painter.

*Luigi Anichini*, of Ferrara, but resident at Venice, may have been the son of the *Fran. Nichini* lauded by Camillo in the first years of the century. By profession a die-sinker, he also engraved gems with the greatest delicacy and precision: the more minute their size the greater spirit did his intagli display. To him, therefore, may be ascribed some of those wonderfully microscopic camei of battle-pieces, full of figures, such as the exploit of Horatius Cocles, and the Battle of Pharsalia, both in the Marlborough Cabinet.

*Alessandro Cesati*, not *Cesari* (so spelt in Vasari's first edition, 1550), distinguished by the epithet *Il Greco*, from his origin (which unfortunately is not particularized by the historian), is extolled as



surpassing all the rest in gracefulness, goodness, perfection, and the entire nature of his art. His principal works are signed ΑΑΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΕΙ, or the same in an abbreviated form, but the suspicion has occurred to myself that many gems signed ΕΑΑΗΝ (a translation of his sobriquet) are due to this artist, for they are in the style of his period, and the letters are plainly as old as the intagli, and not mere recent interpolations. Besides coin-dies for the papal mint, "which he has kept hard at work for many years," says Vasari, in 1550, he also produced innumerable gems. Vasari especially praises his portrait of Henri II., done for the Cardinal Farnese, an *intaglio* in carnelian, "somewhat larger than a giulio (an inch in diameter), and one of the finest modern intagli ever seen for drawing, gracefulness, goodness, and careful execution."\* His medal of Paul III., with the reverse, Alexander kneeling before the High Priest, was pronounced by Mich. Angelo the very perfection of the art, beyond which it was impossible to advance. "And M. A. Buonarroto, looking at it in the presence of Giorgio Vasari, said that the hour for death in the art had arrived, since it was now impossible ever to see anything better." As portraits by him are especially praised those of P. L. Farnese, Duke of Castro, his son Ottavio, and the Card. Farnese—the last a relief in gold upon a silver ground. The Pulsky Collection possessed a head of Paul III., on a large and fine sapphire, ascribed to Il Greco, though unsigned, and certainly worthy of his reputation, being a wonderful specimen of skill in engraving upon so refractory a material. And in the same collection was a most curious intaglio, a lion in his den seen in front face, engraved in a burnt onyx, inscribed in the field with this artist's usual signature—one of those examples of difficulties purposely courted, in which the genius of the age so greatly delighted.

Of all Cesati's numerous works in *cameo*, Vasari particularly extols

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\* Crozat possessed the same portrait, but in flat *relief*, on carnelian also, inscribed on the back ΑΑΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΕΙ, which passed into the Orleans, and with that into the Russian Collection. It is a work of singular merit, and most probably the one quoted by Vasari, the *inaccuracy* of his description being a slip of the pen—or a natural mistake if he only knew the gem by a cast.

three—a child, a lion, and a woman (a nude figure), designating the last as “perfettissima.” But his masterpiece in this line was his head of Phocion. This, in 1750, was in the Zanetti Collection at Venice, and still passed for the most perfect work of the kind ever seen. The Duke of Marlborough subsequently bought this, with three others of less importance, for 1200*l.*, according to La Chaux (Orleans Gems). But if this cameo be in truth Il Greco’s, it must be a replica, for the original still remains in the cabinet of Florence, bearing the vain-glorious inscription—ΠΥΡΓΟΤΕΛΗΣ ΕΠΟΙΕΙ.

*Gio. Ant. dei Rossi*, a Milanese, established at Florence under the patronage of the Grand Duke Cosimo, was famed for his engraving the largest cameo ever executed since the times of the ancients, being an onyx seven inches (“third of a braccio”) in diameter, with the portraits of Cosimo and his wife, Eleonora di Toledo, holding up between them a shield charged with the Florentine giglio, and accompanied by their seven children in three-quarters length. This work, says Vasari, established the reputation of the artist, already known by a number of gems from his hand. One of Rossi’s signed works has come under my notice, an intaglio in sard, Saturn seated, holding a large scythe; under the throne *G. Rossi*. The work exhibits that excessive polish which is the surest criterion for recognising the productions of the Cinque-cento school. This is the sole instance known to me of a Cinque-cento artist’s signature occurring, placed on any other of his works than the crystal plaques, with the exception, perhaps, of the masterpieces of Il Greco; and even *his* name may have been intended to pass current for antique with the world at large. Hence it is demonstrable that the smaller gems then so abundantly executed were meant to be brought into the market as works of ancient engravers, just as the heaps of coins from the dies of the same artists are known to have been.

Milan was then the head-quarters of the art. Agostino del Riccio, in his Treatise ‘On Stones,’ composed under Francesco I., announces his design—unfortunately never fulfilled—of writing the history of the Milanese gem-engravers. He names Maestro Giorgio, Ambrogio, and



Stefano, all from that city, as then engaged for the Grand Duke in the Casino di S. Marco. Giulianelli reasonably supposes that Del Riccio was in great measure indebted to these artists for the materials of his treatise.

*Gasparo* and *Girolamo Misuroni*, also *Cosimo* and *Jacopo da Trezzo*, all Milanese, engraved both camei and intagli, but principally devoted their time to vases of jasper and agate.\* But *Jacopo* was also conspicuous for the merit of his portraits on gems. Vasari observes of him "that he has no rival in doing portraits from the life, in which line he is infinitely strong." Mariette cites an admirable head of Philip II. in relief on calcedony by him. The Marlborough Cabinet has another in yellow crystal, probably by the same hand, unequalled for life-like expression; a third, on sardonyx, in the Royal Gems; and to whom else can more justly be attributed that matchless large cameo on sardonyx of Queen Elizabeth in her youth, the chief ornament of the same collection? Philip summoned him to Madrid, where he was engaged for seven entire years in making the *tabernacolo* for the Escorial high altar out of agates, jaspers, and other fine stones, all of them found in Spain; and to reward his merit the artist was allowed to place his own name in the same line with the king's in the dedicatory inscription written upon the socle of the work. He is reputed to have discovered the mode of engraving upon the diamond. Gorlaeus, his contemporary, quotes him by the Latinized appellation of *Treccia*, as having engraved on this stone the armorial bearings of Philip II.

*Clemente Birago*, however, another Milanese, and patronised by the same monarch, has a better claim to the honour of this discovery. The testimony of Clusius, the botanist, who had known him during his stay in Spain, in 1564, coupled with that of *Lomazzo*, his countryman, leave little room for uncertainty upon this matter. The engraving in

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\* Vasari specifies, as made by the two *Misuroni* for Cosimo I., "two vases in crystal, perfectly miraculous, a vase of wonderful magnitude and beautifully carved in heliotrope, and another in lapis-lazuli deserving of infinite praise." They are still to be seen in the Galleria, Florence.

question was a likeness of Don Carlos, intended for a present to Anna, daughter of Maximilian II., his betrothed bride. For the same ill-fated prince Birago had also engraved on a diamond the arms of Spain as a seal.

*Jacobus Thronus* is related by Gori ('Hist. Dact.' p. 180) to have (about the year 1557) engraved on a *diamond*, with admirable skill, the arms of Mary Queen of England, consort of Philip II. Nothing further is known of him, but his name would lead to the conclusion that he was a Hollander.

*Tortorino* and *Giuliano Taverna*, both of Milan, are also named by Lomazzo—the first as a good engraver of camei, the second as a worker in crystal; and as connected with the latter point it may be remarked that, as late as the year 1750, the Milanese maintained their reputation for their productions in this material.

*Giov. Giacomo Caraglio*, of Verona, at first a copper-plate engraver, and subsequently of medals and gems, was summoned to Poland by King Sigismund I., at whose court he was still living in 1569, having, says Vasari, made a large fortune through that monarch's favour, which he was investing in land in the Parmesan territory, intending to retire thither in his old age. Vasari highly praises his copper-plates, done in the style of Marc. Antonio, and says he was equally successful in his *cameo* and crystal works. But in Sigismund's service he gave up copper-plate engraving, as a mechanical business, and devoted himself entirely to engraving gems and to architecture.

*Annibale Fontana*, who died at Milan in 1587, was famed for his camei and intagli. He executed for William, Elector of Brandenburg, a coffret in crystal, for which he received 6000 scudi.

*Philippo*, known as *Pippo Santa Croce*, originally a shepherd boy, began by engraving groups upon plum and cherry stones. Count Filippin Doria brought him to Genoa, had him instructed in drawing, and thus he became a distinguished engraver in gems. He was the father of a numerous family, the *Pippi*, all of whom followed his profession.

*Properzia dei Rossi*, of Bologna, commenced her career in sculpture



by engraving minute reliefs on peach-stones. Vasari speaks with astonishment of a Crucifixion with an infinity of figures, besides the executioners and the Apostles, executed in this manner. Afterwards she distinguished herself in sculpture in marble, many pieces from her chisel being employed in the Cathedral of S. Petronio. Finally, she gave herself up entirely to engraving copper-plates. Nothing is recorded of her proficiency in gem-engraving, but her extraordinary skill in the first art she cultivated makes it almost certain that she succeeded in cameo-cutting on harder materials. She died (of love) in 1530, the very week that Clement VII. crowned the Emperor at Bologna, to that pontiff's infinite disappointment, who as a lover of art was extremely anxious to have seen her.

*Antonio Dordoni*, of Bussetto, in Parma, died at Rome in 1584, where he is said to have held the first place amongst the engravers of his own generation, the art now beginning rapidly to decline. Several intagli representing façades of temples are described as *Antonio's* in Stosch's MS. catalogue, and valued at the high price of 38*l.* each. Hence I am inclined to attribute to him a singular *tour de force* in the Marlborough cabinet, the interior of a temple, a long perspective of columns, and at the end a statue of Mercury on a pedestal—a laborious trifle.

*Flaminio Natalis*, supposed to be from Liège, renowned as an engraver of coats-of-arms, died at Rome in 1596.

#### SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

D. CALABRESI. FECE. IN. ROMA. is the signature upon the most wonderful effort of ingenuity in cameo-cutting that the difficulty-seeking taste of the Italian Revival has bequeathed to us. This masterpiece, which had cost its author five years of incessant labour, served for a bribe to Pope Gregory XIII., to procure for him the remission of his sentence of perpetual imprisonment. The subject is the one best of all adapted for its purpose—Mars and Venus caught in Vulcan's snare; the material a black and white onyx, of four layers; its dimensions, one

and a-half inch square. In the centre, through the wide black meshes of a net, *completely detached* from the figures underneath, are beheld the amorous pair, half reclining on a couch, and exquisitely moulded in a pearly white, the drawing and finish of the group being absolutely perfect. Outside the net stands Vulcan at full length, hammer in hand, indignantly pointing out the culprits to all the deities of Olympus, who, as busts, form a circle round the scene, upon which they look down with expressions (as their respective characters demand) of astonishment, prudish horror, or delight. At Vulcan's feet stands the careless sentinel, the cock, whose note *ought* to have alarmed the lovers in good time. Each corner of the square is occupied by an appropriate emblem; the *anvil* with tongs of Vulcan, the *dove* of Venus, the *helmet* of Mars, and his *shield*. In all these, advantage has dextrously been taken of the shades of the material to give them more striking effect—most artistically of all in the varied plumage of the dove, the whole of whose back meets the eye. The inscription is relieved in white upon the meshes of the snare.

Of the artist I can discover no account in any biographical work within my reach. There was an eminent painter, his contemporary, with the same *cognomen*, but family name *Preti*, who by a singular coincidence spent much of his life in prison on the charge of homicide. This remarkable cameo comes from the Demidoff Collection, at the recent sale of which it fetched the price, commensurate with its rarity, of 700*l*.

The art was continually decaying in Italy throughout the last quarter of the preceding century, whilst it was assiduously cultivated, although with little success, in Germany, under the patronage of that arch-virtuoso, Rudolf II. Of his times a multitude of vases, cut in hard stones, are preserved in the Gallery of Vienna, but the forms of all are Teutonic and grotesque—mere adaptations of Italian designs to the national taste. His chief artist was *Lehmann*, who enjoyed the exclusive privilege of engraving upon glass, as a recompense for his discovery of that art, which became a staple manufacture in Germany, and drove out of the field the costly and elegant vases in crystal and jasper of the preceding age.



*Miseron* was another of his engravers, created by him a noble, and appointed keeper of the Imperial Cabinet of Curiosities.

*Derier*, son of the latter, was in the service of the Emperor Matthias.

*Christopher Schwargen*, who died in 1600, aged sixty-eight, is compared to Pyrgoteles for his talent in engraving, in the verses under his portrait by Luke Kilian. He is supposed to have lived at Augsburg.

ANNIBAA, according to Raspe, is the signature of a clever die-sinker and gem-engraver, established at Clausthal about the middle of the same century, and who executed many medals for the Houses of Hanover and of Brandenburg.

Few names of Italian artists in this age of decadence have come down to us, yet there is preserved in the Borghese Palace an excellent portrait of Paul V. (of that family), set in a ring, sufficiently attesting that some good artists yet survived to the times of his pontificate.

At Florence, Ferdinand II. (1627), that great restorer of letters, science, and the arts, "rather increased than diminished," says Giulianelli, "the *infinite number*, to use Bianchini's term, of the artists in every branch employed by his father, Cosmo II." From the *Ruole* of his reign, Giulianelli quotes the following names of engravers employed in the Galleria Ducale: *Castrucci*, *Carrione of Milan*, *Giaffieri*, *Monicca*, *Gasparini*; and at Siena, *Perriciuoli*. At Modena, in the same years, there flourished *Chiavenni* and *Vaghi*; at Ferrara the family *Siletti*.

*Adoni* at Rome chiefly engraved clasped hands, "*fedi*," for setting in betrothal rings.

*Borgognone*, who flourished at Florence about 1670, was a great favourite at court, especially with the Duchess Vittoria, for whom he cut many intagli. Works by him in the Florence Collection are: a head in calcedony, set upon a bust in lapis-lazuli; some *Deaths-heads* cut in ruby; and the sun in crystal, for a watch-case. He was a student of the antique, for Andreini found amongst his things a cast of the well-known Muse by Cronius. Vettori possessed several pieces by him in crystal and in glass, such as a true lover's-knot in crystal, a

tiger recumbent, with a thyrsus and broken dart, &c. "Had Mariette," adds Giulianelli, "only seen these works, he would not have been so brief in his notice of this artist."

*Stefano Mochi*, his contemporary, the sculptor, also engraved gems.

*Coldoré*, however, was indubitably the first engraver of this century, though he more properly belongs to the close of the Cinque-cento, his wonderful head of Henri IV., on ruby, being dated 1590. He is, *supposed* to be the Julian de Fontenay mentioned in the *lettres-patentes*, dated Dec. 22, 1608, as the "king's valet and engraver in precious stones"—*Coldoré* being only a sobriquet given to him at court, either from the *gold chain* he wore *ex officio*, or from his birthplace. He worked at Paris for Henri IV. and Louis XIII. The portrait of the former he has repeated over and over again, both in cameo and intaglio, and always with the same finish and success in preserving the likeness. No *figures* are known from his hand; he appears to have confined himself to heads, and his intagli are usually in precious stones. None of the numerous portraits in the French Cabinet attributed to him bear any signature whatever; but a large octagonal sapphire once came under my notice, engraved with a bust of Henri IV. in three-quarters face, in shallow intaglio, marked on the under part of the shoulder with the letters C. D. F., which was plausibly read as *Coldoré fecit*. Mariette mentions a tradition that he was invited over to England by Queen Elizabeth, a thing very probable in itself, considering how scrupulous the virgin-queen was about having her portraits done by only the best hands of the age. Mariette has no doubt that the splendid cameo of Elizabeth in the Crozat (Orleans) Collection was done by *Coldoré* on this occasion. There can be indeed no question that he is the true author of the numerous camei of Elizabeth which collectors, blindly following the error of Horace Walpole, persist in attributing to *Valerio Vicentino*, who, besides the objection of his never having been out of Italy, died twelve years before her accession to the throne! A fine head of Card. Richelieu on Siriam garnet, also in the Crozat Collection, is perhaps too late in point of time to be *Coldoré's* work; besides which, the manner is somewhat too stiff for



him. It was more probably done by one of the following artists, who all flourished under Louis XIII., viz. :

*Maurice*, the father, and the son; and *J. B. Certain*.

*Suzon Rey*, a Frenchman, but domiciled at Rome, enjoyed a great reputation towards the end of the century for executing all kinds of subjects in gems. Particularly admired were his head of Carlo Albani, brother of Clement XI., and the seal made for the March. Castel San Vito,

#### EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

*Flavio Sirletti* (died at Rome, 1737) surpassed all modern artists in the fineness of his touch, and approached the nearest of all to the antique style of the Greeks. This perfection he attained (according to his contemporary, Giurlanelli) by reviving the use of that ancient instrument the *diamond-point*, fixed in the end of an iron tool. Gori states that it was Baron Stosch who suggested to him this idea, as the only possible means of engraving that emerald, a magnificent stone, upon which Clement XI., in 1715, desired to have his pontifical coat of arms cut for his private signet. As he flourished at the time when the zeal of the dilettanti was first directed by Andreini towards the supposed signatures of ancient artists upon gems, he inserted many upon old or retouched stones, and thus enormously enhanced their selling value. Köhler confidently asserts that Andreini's and Stosch's collections were indebted to Sirletti for their finest *inscribed* stones, and so was the famous cabinet of the Jew Medina at Livorno, purchased by Lord Bessborough, as a careful examination has convinced myself. The greater part of those intagli, of wonderful execution, and signed in lettering of incomparable fineness, which we now see, are mainly due to his talent. He was in every respect far superior to Natter, who followed in his traces under the tuition of the same arch-connoisseur. Sirletti excelled in portraits: his best was that of Carlo Maratta, done for Agostino Massaccio, a pupil of that painter. He reproduced on gems several of the finest statues and busts in the Roman galleries, amongst the last, that so celebrated one of *Caracalla*. His intagli

copies of the Hercules Farnese, the Apollo, the Giustiniani Mercury on the Ram, and the Laocoon, are excellent for their drawing and their finish. The last group on amethyst, signed  $\Phi\Sigma$ , was bought by the Duke of Beaufort, not Lord Bessborough, as Mariette has it. Vettori possessed the last work done by him, a Laughing Faun, crowned with ivy. His signatures on his *acknowledged* works are  $\Phi\Sigma$  and sometimes  $\Phi\Lambda\Lambda\text{BIOT}$ .

Francesco and Rainondo, his two sons, followed his profession at Rome. Gems by the former are recognizable by his signature  $\Phi\text{PA}\text{PK}$ .  $\Sigma\text{IPANTOS}$ .

Costanzi, Giovanni and Carlo, were, in 1750, esteemed at the head of their profession at Rome. The elder, according to Stosch, engraved for the Prior Vaini, the head of Nero on a *diamond*. This Nero, together with some twenty-four diamonds and rubies, engraved chiefly by Carlo, passed from Vaini's possession into that of Gian Gastone dei Medici.

On the *diamond*, Carlo also engraved for the King of Portugal a Leda, and a head of Antinous. Mariette praises his style as highly finished, neither too stiff nor too free, his drawing correct, his portraits the actual flesh, and exact likenesses. But I have seen a head of Cosimo III. in calcedony, signed CAV. CAR. COSTANZI (Benedict XIV. had created him a *cavaliere*), which is far from bearing out this extravagant eulogium. "Nothing can be better as a portrait," says Mariette, "than his head of Cardinal Spinola, upon an agate-onyx, and yet it was equalled by his heads of the Pretender and of C. R. Imperiali. In copying the antique masterpieces on gems he has far excelled any of the moderns, and has produced many repetitions of his head of Antinous. Indeed, many connoisseurs have been deceived by his copies; such, for example, as that of the Strozzi Medusa, done in 1729 for Cardinal Polignac, on a calcedony, of the same size and colour as the original, and reproduced even to the artist's name." On a large and beautiful *sapphire*, he engraved a much-admired head of Maria Theresa. But what he himself considered his masterpiece, and which had cost him two years and a half of constant labour, was the great



table *emerald*, two inches in diameter, with the head of the pope in *relief* on the obverse, and those of SS. Peter and Paul on the reverse. This stone was set in the *morse*, or brooch, fastening the cope worn by the pontiff on high festivals; but after once wearing, Benedict ordered it should be dedicated in the treasury of St. Petronio's, Bologna, his native town.

\* *Domenico Landi* was also, when *Vettori* wrote, one of the most reputed artists at the time in the same city. In 1716 he executed a bust of Augustus in calcedony, for the Marquis di Fuentes, the Portuguese ambassador at the papal court. This nobleman probably was owner of the grand cameo of *Didius Julian* and *Manlia Scantilla*, now in the Marlborough Collection, inscribed on the back as originally in "*cimelio Fontesiano*." In 1720, he also executed a portrait on *emerald*, of N. Daodo, the Venetian envoy. There are two fine gems by him, of larger dimensions than ring-stones; one, the heads of Trajan, Plotina, Marciani, and Matidia, facing each other; the second of Severus and Julia, Caracalla and Geta, similarly arranged.

M. ASCHARI, 1725, is the signature of an artist of the highest merit (although unmentioned by *Giulianelli* and *Raspe*), cut upon the edge of a magnificent bust of Diana, in pale topaz, about  $3 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$  inches oval, the work in three-quarters relief, and exquisitely finished, quite in the antique style. This piece was seen by me (November 8, 1865) in the possession of Roberts, jeweller, Great Tichfield Street, London. In the lower edge is a perforation admitting a rod, which supports it vertically for exhibition upon a square plinth of rock-crystal.

F. *Ghinghi*, who had been engraver to the last two dukes of the Medici line, was established at Naples in 1750.

*Anton Pichler*, a Tyrolese, commenced working in the same city about the year 1730. There is much grace in his figures of Venus, and of Cupids—his usual subjects. His works are often signed A.P.

*Girolamo Rossi*, about the same time, was in high repute at Livorno.

F. M. *Fabii*, a Venetian, was pupil of Waldev of Strasburg, but practised his art at Vienna. Of the latter nothing is known, except that his grateful scholar, *Fabii*, gave him all the credit for his own

works, which (says Giulianelli, from personal acquaintance) reflect upon him immortal glory. In proof of this he specifies Fabii's Dionysius, Julia Titi, Pallas, and Cybele tower-crowned, all in sards; a Mercury in topaz; Alexander, a cameo in agate-sardonyx; and numerous other camei, Otho, Matidia, Pallas, &c.

*Masini*, also a Venetian, had then been working at Florence, where he had left some admirable performances.

In 1753, there were residing at Florence, and all artists of merit and reputation, *L. M. Weber*, *A. Santini*, *Gio. Cavini*, *A. Ricci*, alias *Briosco Crispo*.

*Fran. Borghigiani*, born at Florence, 1727, was a self-taught genius. His earliest work of merit was a head of Alexander in garnet. He went to Rome in 1751, where he executed camei of Socrates, Tiberius, Faustina, and intagli of Regulus and a Negro's head; also many camei, both in stone and in shell.\* Finding his labours there but ill remunerated, he returned to Livorno, and got many commissions from English gentlemen and merchants there. Of these works are specially noticed a Roman consul in plasma, a cameo of Faustina, &c. Thence returning to Florence in 1752, Ignatius Hughford the painter took him into his own house, and there Borghigiani speedily attained celebrity. Giulianelli especially notices a copy of the Pitti Bacchante, done for a Mr. Hollis, a female head in jacinth, a skull and cross-bones in cameo, a head of Phocion, a cameo head of the Saviour, &c. For his patron, Hughford, he did a Leander swimming, a Plato, a Socrates, a Bacchante, a Ptolemy, a Judgment of Paris, &c.

*Gottfried Grauft*, known as *Il Tedesco* at Rome, had been pupil, says Gori, on Stosch's authority, of one N. Oxe, a Swiss. He enjoyed a considerable reputation in that city about 1760.

*Laurent Natter*, of Nurnburgh, first practised the trade of heraldic engraver at Venice; thence removed to Florence in 1723, where, at Stosch's instigation, he began to study and copy the antique, and is justly suspected of having supplied this patron with many of the

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\* The first notice of shell-cameo work I have been able to discover.



masterpieces of ancient artists enriching his collection. At Rome also he worked for some time with great success. Much praise was given to his *reduced* copy of the Julia Titi by Evodus, but still more to his portrait of Cardinal Albani, as being an original work. A head of a youth in amethyst, belonging to the Abbé Rothelm, was greatly admired in Italy. Finally, he migrated to London, and after some years' residence there was invited (according to Mariette) to the Persian court by the celebrated Thamas Kouli Khan (Nadir Shah). Some say he died at St. Petersburg, in 1763; but Gori, in 1767, speaks of him as then still in London, and enjoying a most wonderful reputation.\* He had been persuaded to leave Florence by the representations of several English gentlemen, admirers of his genius. In London he published a work that established his fame: '*Sur la Manière Antique de Graver en Pierres Fines*,' 4to., 1755, with plates, now excessively scarce. The Marlborough Cabinet possesses several of his acknowledged works, besides a series of imperial heads in a great variety of stones, which various circumstances make me attribute with confidence to his hand. The MS. catalogue of the Bessborough Gems, incorporated in that collection, was drawn up by him in 1762. His earliest signature is L.N., in letters almost imperceptible;† but as his reputation increased it appears in full, NATTEP, or else translated into ΤΑΡΟΤ; and occasionally his name is expressed by a *rebus*, the figure of a snake (which *Natter* signifies in German), engraved as a cognizance on some conspicuous part of the design, as the helmet or shield of a warrior. Although his works deceived so many of his contemporaries, they will be found on examination to differ materially from the antique, particularly in the treatment of the hair. Indeed he fell far short of the success already attained by Sirletti in the revival the ancient style.

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\* Dr. Billing states that he held the post of engraver to the Mint, and executed the coronation medal of George III. He subsequently obtained the same appointment at St. Petersburg, where he died.

† So as not to interfere with the claims of the works to being *antique*, the character under which they first came into the market.

*Marc Tüscher*, the painter Natter's townsman, is related by his friend Gori to have learnt the art by watching Natter at work, and afterwards to have successfully engraved his own portrait, signed MAPKOΣ, both in sard and beryl, as well as a reduced copy of Aspasius's Minerva. But Natter himself asserts the pretended gems are no more than *pastes*, made from a wax model, and retouched by Ghinghi the engraver. That Tüscher collected antiques appears from a fine Greek intaglio of Mars, in my own possession, on the back of which his name is scratched in with the diamond point. But his fame really rests upon his admirable plates of the medals of Magna Græcia and Sicily.

*Louis Siries* was incomparably the most renowned and admired engraver of his day (about 1751). He was a Frenchman, goldsmith to Louis XV., but settled at Florence, where he held the appointment of Director of the Grand Ducal Gallery. In his original profession of goldsmith he had acquired immense notoriety by his microscopic jewels, especially a figure of the Gallic Cock, hardly discernible to the naked eye, but yet perfect in every part when viewed with the microscope. According to Giulianelli, he learnt, self-taught, the art of gem-engraving in the space of seven years. St. Laurent has devoted a special volume to his performances, which he lauds in the most extravagant terms—in which he is seconded by both Giulianelli and Gori. "His talent lay in achieving supposed impossibilities, and the perpetual aiming after originality; dreading nothing so much as the being thought an *imitator of the ancients*." In accordance with these principles, his works usually consist of numerous microscopic figures, which Natter unceremoniously styles mere scratches, although Raspe allows them to display considerable spirit when examined with the magnifier; though they fall infinitely short, both in arrangement and in finish, of the similar productions of P. M. da Pescia, whose forte also lay in this department. Raspe therefore justly puts down in the category of "*difficiles nugæ*" and the "*labor ineptiarum*" these highly vaunted nonpareils of the too original Gaul.

Many of his works have found their way to England; some are in



the Marlborough Collection, and all that I have seen fully justify Natter's sentence upon them. For the most part they are on thin disks of golden sard let into deep moulded frames of white agate, a combination designed to pass for a single stone, and which, indeed, has completely imposed upon Gori, who talks with wonder of this framework and the levelness of the field within as matters involving incredible difficulties in their execution, as certainly would be the case if attempted in a solid stone. But his heads are weak and devoid of expression, so are his figures, and his landscapes are in good sooth "mere scratches." All are signed either with L.S. or the name in full.

The chief productions of L. Siries enumerated by Gori are his trial-piece, in 1747, on lapis-lazuli in a border of the same—subject, the Crucifixion, in intaglio on both sides; in the same material, but in relief, "The Wonders of Nature, the Arts, and Sciences;" cameo, the bust of Louis XV. encircled by the zodiac, on an onyx of three layers, and presented by him to the king; heads of Francis and Maria Theresa facing each other, in cameo; Sol in his car, in the centre of the zodiac; Hercules and Antæus, the largest piece he attempted; the Fall of Phaethon; Diomede, master of the Palladium; Hercules fully armed advancing to the combat; Pentheus cutting down the vines; Esculapius leaning on his staff; Mercury carrying the infant Bacchus to the Nymphs; Aurora and Cephalus; the young Hercules; two heads; the mourning Achilles, seated. For Baron Stosch he engraved "the Discovery of Ancient Monuments," on a yellow sard; on a very minute gem the Sacrifice of a bull at an altar, with seven figures of attendants; Diogenes in his tub, conversing with Alexander; with above a hundred more, all done between 1747 and 1760.

*Passaglia*, a lieutenant in the papal guard, has surpassed every modern, except perhaps Rega, in attaining to not merely the antique spirit in design, but even the peculiar all but inimitable antique touch in the execution. Of the former, his Centaur vanquished by a Bacchante is a conspicuous proof; of the latter, his Cupid crossing the waves on his own quiver, masted with an arrow, and steered with his bow. The sinking of the intaglio and the finishing of the details with

the diamond-point, is entirely after the Greek technique. Though plainly signed with the artist's name (disguised in Greek letters, ΗΑΖΑΑΙΑΣ), these works have been received and published as indisputable antiques. ('Spilzburg Gems.')

*Dorsch*, of Nurnburgh, who flourished from 1676 to 1732, is known solely for having engraved to Ebermayer's order a vast series of heads of popes, emperors, kings, and inaccurate copies of famous antiques, with nothing in the execution to recommend them. He brought up his two daughters to the same profession.

*Susanna*, one of them, better known as *Madame Preissler*, became very far superior to her teacher in both cameo and intaglio engraving. Her brother-in-law, the younger Preissler, is also spoken of with commendation by Mariette.

*Becker* \* (died 1743) was regarded as the first in his profession in Germany during the century. Born at Coblenz, he went to Vienna, where he cut the dies for the medals of two of the emperors of Germany. Thence he was summoned to St. Petersburg by Peter the Great, to engrave his great seal, and make the dies for his new mint. But his works in gems are, for the most part, only seals of German princes, containing numerous quarterings very skilfully done. His only portraits on gems that are noticed are those of Charles VI. and his empress, and one of Prince Eugene.

*F. J. Barrier*, born at Paris in 1680, gained considerable reputation

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\* He must not be confounded with the "Hofrath" Becker, goldsmith and antiquary, who flourished at Offenbach between 1805 and 1825, under the patronage of the Prince von Isenberg, an invalided general of Napoleon's, and a zealous amateur in coins. Becker, turning his patron's taste to his own profit, cut with extraordinary skill about three hundred sets of dies for the rarest types in the Greek, Roman, Hispano-Gothic, and Frankish series. At least this is the number he avows in the catalogue published by himself; but it is suspected that many other false dies known to exist are due to his perverted ingenuity. These fabrications he put into circulation through the medium of the Frankfort Jews. He, after the publication of his list, used to sell the complete series of coins, struck in fine silver, at three thousand ducats per set.

I have seen a very meritorious head of M. Agrippa, sard, signed HECKER: whether an accidental mis-spelling of this name, or designating another artist, "Hecker," is beyond my power to decide.



as an engraver of portraits. His most admired are the head of the Mar. Rangoni, and another of Fontanelle. Barrier also cut groups of figures in miniature upon the body of carnelian and agate vases, which are spoken of with praise by Mariette.

*Jacques Guay*, a native of Marseilles, studied at Rome, where he engraved a head of Antinous after the bust in the Capitol. Mariette calls his drawing correct and imitation of the Greek manner *perfect*, his portraits also admirable, especially that of Crebillon. "No modern artist has ever thrown into his work so much spirit as Guay has done in a sard, *The Victory of Fontenoy*, after the design of Bouchardon." But his masterpiece, completed after two years of incessant labour, was the bust of Louis XV., a cameo in flat relief, done avowedly in emulation of the incomparable Henri II., by Alessandro II Greco.

On Barrier's demise, Guay was appointed to the office of gem-engraver to the king. Many of his gems still remain in the Bib. Impériale. *Madame de Pompadour* herself engraved a set of copper-plates, and with much success, in illustration of Guay's series of historical intagli.

*Johann Pichler* must be declared the greatest proficient of his age, unless indeed *Rega* be equalled with him, in the art of engraving in intaglio, his camei\* being few and unimportant in comparison. He was the son of the Ant. Pichler above noticed, and born at Naples, where his father had been domiciled from the beginning of the century. He soon, however, surpassed his teacher, and to that extent that his works were often sold by the dealers as antiques of the first order. To prevent this fraud he ever afterwards signed his works with his name in full, in delicate Greek capitals, ΠΙΧΑΕΡ.

Pichler told Dutens ('*Mem. d'un Voyageur*,' iii. 153) that, although he had always been striving to imitate the antique masters, he did not

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\* One, however, the conjugated heads of Tiberius and Livia, finely executed in a large and splendid sardonyx, with his regular signature, has recently come to my knowledge.

consider his own best works as equal to even their mediocre performances. Nevertheless, having once obtained a fine sardoine, he engraved on it a youth with a hoop (*trochus*) tolerably to his satisfaction. He lost the gem, and supposed it stolen by a pupil. Some weeks after, Alfani, a noted *antiquario*, brought him his gem, for which he had just paid fifty zecchins to another *antiquario*, Christiani, who had bought it of a peasant, who had dug it up in his garden. Pichler is ordered, to make a fac-simile at the price of forty zecchins. Alfani takes the two to Paris, sells the first to M. St. Augny, the copy to another amateur, both as antiques, at a hundred louis each. The purchasers chancing to meet, each claims his own as *the* antique of the two, and finally send both by post to Rome, for Pichler's judgment. Then he tells the whole story, having discovered that his pupil had employed a *contadino* to pass off the gem on Christiani.

His intagli are usually on stones of large extent, the drawing is admirable, the engraving not very deep, but after the true Greek manner, the details carefully given, and the whole beautifully polished. This great artist's forte lay in the representation of female loveliness: his large bust of Helen, his numerous copies of the antique Venus at full length in her various attitudes, and in busts, constitute the noblest of his works. Köhler accuses him of having produced a large number of Etruscan scarabei, in imitation of their peculiar style, and designed to pass for antique; and also of inserting "artist's signatures" upon really ancient gems at the request of their owners—the most despicable of frauds. His death took place at Rome in 1791.

*Louis Pichler*, his brother, has left a few works of a very high order. They are distinguished by the signature A. HIXAEP.

*Rega*, of Naples, who flourished at the end of the century (having commenced as a sculptor), is pronounced by Visconti a most "admirable artist, some of his heads\* in intaglio rivalling the best of the

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\* A large Apollo-head (Beverley) displays the true Greek modelling, and even the unattainable velvety polish in the face. It is only the misconceived disposition of the hair that betrays its modern creation.



antique." And this opinion of the great archæologist is confirmed by many specimens of Rega's skill that have come under my own notice, especially a Bacchante's head, that favourite subject with the ancients, full of life and wild inspiration, the treatment of the hair also being beyond all praise, and exactly in the true Greek manner. This piece conspicuously attests his vast superiority over his rival, *Marchant*, who has treated the same subject, but in his usual tame and laboured style; whereas Rega's, although perfectly finished, displays the utmost freedom of touch. In my own collection is a head of Pallas by him, a hippocampus on the helmet, a complete Greek gem, on aquamarine. Of his full-length figures, Ajax in despair, a bull recumbent by his side, is truly wonderful, both for design and delicacy of finish. Like the others just quoted, it might well be taken for antique, but for his signature, PEFA, which always appears in the field of his gems. His camei also are equally impressed with the genuine antique stamp. Visconti makes a special exception in his favour when dissenting from Millin's eulogium upon the artists of the age, whom *he* considers far below the best names of the Cinquecento, like Il Greco, Bernardi, and Belli, in boldness of manner and accuracy of drawing. "Besides, the latter had a style of their own, or at least that of their time, whilst the modern are mere servile copyists of the antique, both in their compositions and their forms." He died in 1812.

*Simon*, established in Paris, was great-grandson to the famous Thomas Simon, chief engraver to Oliver Cromwell, whose coins have always been considered as unequalled in modern times. The gems executed by his descendant, Chabouillet, speaks of as possessing considerable merit. The great medallist was also, according to the universal rule of his times, a gem-engraver: this *a priori* conclusion is confirmed by Giulianelli, who quotes from Stosch's collection pastes taken from his gem-portraits of Cromwell and Clarendon. In the Devonshire Cabinet is a cameo head of the Protector, in all probability his work; in fact, his heads on the coins are treated precisely in the style of camei in flat relief, to which unusual mode of treatment much

of their effect is due.\* From the name it may be concluded he was of French extraction, perhaps one of the Huguenot Exodus of watch-makers, jewellers, silk-weavers, who in the century before—

“artes  
Intulit agresti Latio.”

Of contemporary artists in 1752, our great authority Giulianelli highly praises *Aaron Woolf*, alias *L'Ebreo*, son of a Brandenburg Jew. His quoted works are a *Leda*, in sard, and the arms of the king of Naples, in white sapphire. He was then settled at Siena, but previously worked at Livorno, and probably the Medina Collection possesses some unrecognised specimens of his skill. Francis of Lorraine, when made Grand Duke of Tuscany, employed him to engrave his great seal, and the other state seals.

*Miched*, a pupil of Guay's, is mentioned by La Chaux in 1784, as a young artist of much promise.

*Jeuffroy*, living in Paris in 1791, has obtained from Raspe a most flattering notice on the occasion of his portrait of Mrs. Cosway, the actress. “In executing that admirable work, he has certainly proved in a manner highly creditable to himself that the modern art has only to borrow and to employ the method of the antique, in order to appear with the same dignity.”

In 1797, Millin names as the engravers then most in repute in Rome, *Santarilli*, *Masini*, and *Capperoni*; at Naples, *Rega*, already mentioned, and Signora *Talani*, of Roman extraction.

To conclude the age with due dignity, I shall here insert the name of a lady artist of imperial rank, and of no mean talent in the profession, if we can believe Köhler's declaration that “the camei of the imperial family in the Russian Cabinet are by the Grand Duchess Maria Feodorowna (wife of the unlucky Paul), in which the accuracy of the likeness, as much as the finish and delicacy of the execution, are deserving of all praise.”

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\* Several small steel dies, engraved with heads of the distinguished men of the day, intended for seals, according to the then prevailing fashion, are published by Virtue in his ‘Medals of T. Simon.’



To this school must be referred the engraver AMASTINI, of whom I can find no other record than Nagler's notice that he copied antique gems at Rome during the latter half of the century, and this signature on a cameo in the Blacas Cabinet. The subject is Venus seizing Cupid by the arm, as though about to chastise him, executed in a truly antique manner, on a large and beautiful sardonyx, although the drawing betrays the age that produced it, by its Berninisque flightiness.

Of *Cades*, an artist of the same age, this cabinet exhibits a very meritorious specimen of his proficiency in cameo work.

Cades, in partnership with Ginganelli, Dies, and Odelli, produced, in the first quarter of the present century, at the commission of Prince Poniatowsky, of Florence, the enormous series of gems that have made his name notorious.

"The last of the Romans," not speaking figuratively, surviving down to our times, were *Cerbara* and *Girometti* (b. 1790), who maintained to the last the glory of the art, for the intagli by the former, the camei by the latter, equal any of either ancient or modern days. Girometti's masterpiece is the Hebe presenting nectar to Jupiter, an important cameo in Oriental onyx, known to everybody by its numberless repetitions in Roman shell.





#### ENGLISH GEM-ENGRAVERS.

WHEN Mariette published his history in 1750, England had produced no artist of any celebrity in this department; and he had been unable to meet with more than the few names that follow.

*Christian Reisen*, son of a Danish engraver, who came to England in the suite of William III. He died in 1725, at the early age of forty, but, nevertheless, has left a considerable number of his works. His portrait of Charles XII. of Sweden, a three-quarter face, was correct enough in drawing; but all his intagli are much deficient in finish, owing to the excessive rapidity of his mode of execution.

*Claus*, a pupil of his, and the most able of them all, became insane, and died in 1739.

*Smart*, another of his pupils, was working in Paris in the year 1722.

*Seaton*, a Scotchman, a third pupil, was, in 1750, at the head of his profession in London.

Mariette observes of *Smart*, that he worked with astonishing celerity, so that in a single day he would finish several portraits, and those by no means in a careless style. His best work then known was



a head of *Monima*, after the antique. *Seaton*, on the other hand, strove to give extreme finish to his gems, which made them cold, weak, and without spirit. His best were his heads of Pope, Inigo Jones, and Sir John Newton: for the last he was paid twenty-five guineas—a price evidently thought extravagant by *Mariette*, a sufficient indication how low the art had then fallen. With its wonderful revival towards the end of the century, its rewards were on a scale never heard of before, even in the palmy days of the Italian Revival, as will appear from some instances to be hereafter adduced.

*Marchant* (b. 1755, d. 1812) has obtained by far the highest reputation of any English\* professor of this art, and not without foundation. He was settled at Rome in the latter part of the last century for a period of sixteen years, and executed numerous fine gems, modern portraits from the life, antique heads, single figures and groups, in the Greek style—all intagli;† at least, no cameo with his signature, MARCHANT . ROMAÆ, has ever come to my knowledge. There is much grace and delicacy in his works, but their finish, too minute, interferes with their effect, and renders his heads deficient in vigour and expression. Their first appearance betrays the fact that they were executed by the aid of a powerful magnifier, and therefore they must be viewed through such a medium to bring out their details. This is the common error with modern engravers, and one of *Pichler's* and *Rega's* chief merits is that they avoided it—their works, like those of the ancients, producing their full effect at the first view.

*Marchant's* talents were abundantly appreciated in his own age, perhaps in some measure from the circumstance of the locality of his residence, Rome, which brought him into immediate contact with wealthy amateurs, ever inclined to pay higher for art abroad than at home. Amongst his patrons were the Prince Regent, who appointed him his "Engraver of Gems," and (much more to his profit) the Duke

\* A German by birth, according to Nagler's 'Künstler-Lexicon.'

† Of which he published (1792) a selection of one hundred casts, with a descriptive catalogue in quarto, very carefully drawn up. This was done by subscription, and the list of names appended shows the distinguished patronage he enjoyed.

of Marlborough, whose cabinet possesses many of his choicest pieces: in some cases the catalogue notes that fine stones had been sent from hence to Rome, to be engraved by him. The same cabinet boasts also of his masterpiece, *Hercules restoring Alceste to Admetus*, a commission from the Elector of Saxony, and a present from that prince to the duke in acknowledgment of the gift of that magnificent work, 'The Marlborough Gems.'\* Another of his best performances known to me is a group of two females, apparently portraits, the one standing, the other reclining on a sofa, for which, it is said, he was paid two hundred guineas. The stone is a large brownish sard (*sardoine*). A fact mentioned by Clarac is a testimony to the goodness of Marchant's style. He was shown at Otranto a paste taken from an intaglio by him, which being backed with real stone, in the usual fashion of such forgeries, or *doublets*, had been sold at an enormous price to a noble amateur, for a most important Greek work just discovered in that locality. The latter part of his life he was chief engraver to the English Mint, preceding T. Wyon.

Burch, R.A. (died 1814), had been Marchant's instructor, and an admirable artist, both in cameo and intaglio. Of the former, a remarkable example is the George and Dragon, on sardonyx, intended for the "Jewel" of the Order. A head of Hercules, intaglio in sard, once seen by me, was worthy of the age of Dioscorides. The Marlborough Cabinet also contains many of his signed gems, the finest being his head of Ganymede, in a most beautiful sardonyx, intaglio. Like most modern engravers, however, he failed in representing the hair, rendering it by masses, too heavy and compact. He however is not, in any one point, to be compared to his pupil Marchant.

C. Brown, somewhat earlier than the two last masters, was noted for his intaglio heads of Bacchantes, figures of Cupids, either singly or in groups, and was very successful in his portraits from the life. He also worked in cameo, the most important of his pieces in this line

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\* As is commemorated by the inscription on the back of the gem, a fine sard, SAXONIA PRINCEPS DONI MEMOR.



being a helmeted bust of Minerva, in a very pure and bold manner, three inches high. His signature is C.B., or sometimes the name is full.

*W. Brown*, his brother, was no mean artist in the same line, and much more prolific than Charles, judging from the circumstance that Tassie has more than twice as many pastes with his signature on his list. But Raspe notes that it is uncertain to which of the two the signature BROWN alone is to be referred. They were established at Paris as well as London.

*Wray*, of Salisbury (died 1770), is celebrated for a few, but extremely fine intagli, pastes from which were deemed worthy of admission into Tassie's catalogue. But though acknowledged the first of English engravers of his day, twenty guineas was the highest remuneration he ever obtained for the finest of his works. These are, as classed by himself in order of merit: The Dying Cleopatra; copy of the Strozzi Medusa; the Magdalene; Flora; the Madonna; Female Head, ideal; another, in the same style; Milton, a front-face; Milton, a profile; another of the same; Cicero; Pope; Zingara; Antinous. They are signed either with his name in English, or else Grecized very ingeniously into ΟΤΡΑΙΟΣ.

*Pistrucci*, though a Roman by birth (b. 1784), properly comes under this heading, having been, as it were, naturalized by a forty years' residence in London, where his success, as far as pecuniary remuneration went, surpassed the wildest dreams of any of his profession in previous ages. At the beginning of his career, when still working at Rome, he executed the much-disputed "Head of Flora," a cameo bought by Payne Knight for antique, and regarded by him to the last, despite all conviction,\* as the choicest gem in his collection.

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\* Pistrucci's own statement is that he executed this cameo for a dealer, An. Bonelli, in the space of eight days, for the stipulated price of twenty scudi (five pounds), and that a *letter*, his own private mark, is to be seen on the top of the head, upon the twist of the hair. But the great English connoisseur was not the man to allow his *dictum*, once issued, to be thus controverted. He explains, in his catalogue, the subject as a Proserpine crowned with pomegranate flowers, indignantly subjoining with reference to Pistrucci: "Qui lapidem hunc se sua manu scalpsisse gloriatus est; et se eas (rosas) ad

His forte lay in rilievo-work, especially in stones of one colour; for example, his Trajan in sapphirine calcedony, which has very great merit. Of *intagli* with his signature, no examples have come to my knowledge.\* Wellesley Pole, afterwards created Lord Maryborough, his first patron, when made Master of the Mint, appointed him chief engraver to that establishment in 1817, on the demise of T. Wyon, soon after his coming to London. At the great recoinage in 1816, a jasper cameo by him (executed for Lord Maryborough), a Greek horseman in combat, was adopted, with a slight variation, for the reverse of the sovereigns and crowns. On this occasion he gave great offence to the susceptibilities of John Bull, by signing his name in full in the exergue of the latter pieces, a thing hitherto unknown in this country, though commonly done abroad; for example, on the French coinage, beginning with that of the first Republic. Nevertheless, all were forced to own that the improved copy of the same type, which appears upon the pieces of George IV., is the finest work that ever embellished the current coinage of a modern nation. But the same praise cannot be bestowed upon the portraits on the obverse. Even in his most finished piece, the double-sovereign, they have a scratchy appearance, and are entirely wanting in the boldness that a coin-die ought to possess; but as he is reported to have cut the steel matrices by means of a lapidary's wheel, as if working upon a gem-cameo, the feebleness of the result is easily accounted for. The weakest part of his style is his treatment of the hair, which is extremely unnatural and wiry; yet his coronation medals of George IV. and Victoria are entirely free from this defect;

*vivum imitando expressisse, pari audacia et impudentia asseruit!*" Knight had his credit as a *cognoscente* deeply staked in the matter, for he had actually paid the crafty Bonelli £500 for the *Greek antique*!

\* In his autobiography, a little masterpiece in its way, but which unfortunately goes down no further than 1817, he mentions that he had often seen camel of his work, sold to Roman dealers, converted into veritable antiques by roughening and steeping to give them a *patina*. To obviate this he used to place his private mark, a Greek A, in some concealed place on the hair or drapery of his figures. One of these dealers, established in London, An. Bonelli, had persuaded him to come to this country, with the design of engrossing his labour, and making his own profit out of it—but disappointed in this deep-laid plot, became his bitter enemy, caused him to be stopped at Dover as a French spy, and gave him infinite annoyance afterwards.



in fact, show more boldness in the execution than could have been expected from a modern. Nevertheless, the improvement he effected in the coinage was absolutely miraculous, considering the abject state into which it had sunk during the long and disastrous reign of George III. For the last thirty-five years of his life he worked incessantly upon his dies for the *Waterloo Medal*, which, according to his own published account, far excelled anything ever attempted in that way, both in its magnitude ( $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter) and likewise in the number of figures introduced. It had been the intention of his patrons, whom he so long outlived, to present a copy in gold to each of the princes who shared in that supposed triumph, and in silver to the minor satellites of their glory; but as the monk hath it—

“Gloria mundana nichil est nisi visio vana;”

for when the *matrices* (only) were at last completed (which owing to his disputes with the Mint corporation was not before 1849), the “entente cordiale” then flourishing between ourselves and neighbours rendered it highly inexpedient and ungracious to employ them for their intended purpose; and therefore the dies lie in the Mint mere useless curiosities. The sums paid to the artist during the progress of the engraving, on account of work done, surpass all belief, and therefore need not be inserted here. But the abortive result of these years of toil yields a moral—that a medal intended to commemorate a victory ought to be issued as speedily as possible after the event, the chances being that the lapse of a short time will make the nation (after paying the bill of costs) but too anxious to consign to oblivion both the war, its causes; and its results.

During this period \* he was not idle in his proper profession, and

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\* Dr. Billing states the prices paid for some of his chief works as follows :—

George and Dragon, jasper cameo, 100 guineas.

Medusa, full face, jasper cameo, 200 guineas.

Force subdued by Love and Beauty, a lion bound in garlands by Venus and Cupid, cameo, 200 guineas.

Youthful Bacchus, cameo, 300 guineas.

St. Andrew, jewel of the Order, cameo, 350 guineas.

his merits, great as they undoubtedly were, continued to be remunerated in the same extraordinary measure, so long as the taste of amateurs was directed in that way. Thus for his cameo of Augustus and Livia in sapphirine, which in the Hertz sale fetched no more than 30*l.*, had been paid to him originally 800*l.*, the largest amount doubtless ever received for a work of the kind in all the history of the art.\* He died at Windsor in 1855, retaining his wonderful eyesight to the last.

The glyptic art, during the period of its short-lived prosperity in this country, extending from 1750 to 1820, or barely seventy years, was cultivated by a host of aspirants, zealously bent upon rivalling the Italian masters, their contemporaries, and was by some amongst them carried to a degree of perfection hardly to be looked for. Hear what the experienced Raspe says of them:—"These heads of Apollo (2814 to 2819), the work of four English masters of great distinction, and now living (in 1791), Burch sen., C. and W. Brown, and Burch jun., may, for the excellence of work and the truth of character, be compared to the best engravings that the art has produced. They prove, in the most satisfactory manner, that the god of the arts has begun to look with favour upon the artists of England." To these Apollo heads may be added another, probably superior to all, that by the *Harris* mentioned for other works, and which must have been done after the publication of Raspe's book. And in the way of figures, few either ancient or modern can stand comparison with the Sleeping Venus, an intaglio of unusual dimensions, with the signature in the exergue of GREW. F.

An idea of the flourishing state of the profession in England during those years may be gathered from the goodly array of the names signing gems, admitted for their excellence into Tassie's Catalogue,

Minerva, a cameo four inches in diameter, 500 guineas.

Siris Bronzes, copy in cameo, 250 guineas.

For a medal obverse his charge was 100 guineas, and consequently for the Waterloo, estimated to contain the work of thirty common medals, he was paid £3500.

\* Pistrucci instructed two daughters of his, Elena and Elisa, in his art. They are now established at Rome, and continue to execute camei in onyx which are said to possess considerable merit.



and who all had attained their reputation during the latter half of the century. They are:—Band, Barnett W., Bemfleet, Berry (in Scotland), Bragg, Brown C., Brown W., Burch R.A., Burch E.B.F., Cave Jos. (in Scotland), Crane, Deane (died young, leaving only three works, angels' heads, of great beauty), Fraser, Frewin, Grew, Harris, Hill, Hills J., Holland, Kirk, Lane, Law, Logan (at Dublin), Milton J., Nossop (at Dublin), Peart, Pingo, engraver to the Mint, Pownall W., Pownall T., Simon, great-grandson of the famous T. Simon, Smith J., Smith T., Thompson, Vere, Warner, Whitley, Wickstead, Williams, Wise, Wray, Yeo, engraver to the Mint.





## SEALS IN TERRA-COTTA—TESSERÆ.

IMPRESSIONS of intagli in disks of burnt clay a little exceeding the dimensions of the gems are frequently to be met with. One class, indeed, of them can be accounted for—those found so abundantly amongst Assyrian remains, bearing the impression of the royal signet, and in one most interesting example, given by Layard, that of the contemporary king of Egypt—the seals of Sennacherib and Sabaco II. These had been deposited in the chambers whence they have been lately exhumed (ancient record offices), when attached by a string passing through them to state documents, as appears from certain papyri still preserved with their original seals similarly appended.

Amongst those of later date many, I suspect, are the actual matrices used for casting the paste intagli; and the coarseness of the material would explain that roughness of surface which so strongly distinguishes the antique from the recent productions of this art. In fact, Heraclius, in his unintelligible recipe for making artificial gems, begins by directing you to hollow out a piece of *creta*, or plastic-clay. This view is confirmed by the circumstance that the moulds serving for the issue of the vast billon coinage of the Later Empire (whether due to forgers



or to the government) are composed of the same substance, and in a very similar form. Whole sets of these coin-moulds turn up from time to time. Large deposits have been found near Bridgewater, near Wakefield, and in France about Arles and Lyons, in what was evidently the ruins of the ancient mint. Again, the greatest part of these impressions of gems are brought from Syria, the parent of the art of glass-making. It is but reasonable to conclude that moulds of the same material would be used in the two processes, so analogous to each other in their nature.

Some have explained these seals as being the "*Tesserae Hospitalis*," serving in lieu of letters of introduction for travellers from one friend to another resident in a distant country. In the '*Pseudolus*,' Plautus makes the Macedonian soldier leave in the slave-dealer's keeping an impression of his signet, his own portrait, with a deposit on account of the purchase of the girl he has bargained for, and afterwards sends his servant Harpax with the residue of the sum, who, to authenticate his mission, is furnished with another impression of the same signet. This Plautus terms "*symbolum*;" and from the custom the word ultimately acquired its present acceptance. Amongst the other bon-mots of the famous *Lais* recorded by Athenæus, on receiving the clay impression of her lover's signet (the prearranged signal for her visit to him), she bids the messenger "Tell him I cannot come, for it is muddy (or mud);" the Greek word admitting of both meanings—hence the joke, for the Greeks, like their Assyrian masters in this art, used pipe-clay, *γῆ σιμαυρπίς*, for sealing with. Soft wax variously coloured did not come into use until Roman times; our hard sealing-wax, more properly sealing-lac, as the Germans call it, was a Dutch importation from India of the seventeenth century.

To this use of clay hangs a wild story. The Erythræan Sibyl had obtained from Apollo the gift of immortality on condition that she would never again look upon her native *earth*. She therefore settled herself at Cumæ in Italy, but having forgotten to couple the continuance of youth with her immortality, she wasted away with age till nothing but her voice was left, yet was unable to die. The senate

of Erythræ, taking compassion upon her distress, sent her a letter sealed with clay, and the Sibyl, as soon as she cast her eyes upon this modicum of her native earth, was released from the bondage of existence.

The numerous counters extant in lead, in ivory, and even in leather, as well as in clay, were for the most part *tesserae*. Such *tesserae* were employed for the most important purposes: for example, before a battle, to communicate the watchword to the soldiers, as Virgil hath it,—

“— il belli tessera signum.”

Also by envoys, figuratively to express their commission; as by the Roman ambassadors to the Carthaginian senate, who offered a spear and a caduceus, symbols of war or of peace, for their option. “M. autem Varro non hastam ipsam neque ipsum caduceum missa dicit, sed duas *tesserulas* in quarum altera caducei in altera hastæ simulacra fuerunt incisa.” (A. Gell. xi. 28.)

Such objects as we are considering serve to explain the money of clay and of leather—“nummi fictiles et scortei”—described by the author of that strange treatise, ‘De Rebus Bellicis,’ as the primitive currency of the Romans, and the return to which he strongly urges as the best means for relieving the exhausted finances of the state in his own age, that (it would appear) of Arcadius and Honorius.

•And this chapter on seals may be suitably concluded with an anecdote of Verres—“cet amateur terrible,” as Caylus aptly styles him. Having been struck with a seal upon a letter he had received, he politely requested the sight of the gem itself, which he took care to forget to return to the owner—an act out of which Cicero makes a most heinous crime, and which most collectors would equally censure, and—imitate.







## CASTS IN PLASTER OF PARIS AND IN SULPHUR.

THE chief of archæologists, Visconti, in his '*Esposizione di Gemme Antiche*,' justly remarks: "How conducive the study and the accurate examination of ancient works in the precious stones (commonly termed gems) are to the understanding of antiquities and to every species of valuable erudition, as well as to the intelligence of the arts of design and the training of the eye in the distinguishing of true and simple beauty, is an argument already sufficiently enlarged upon by others, and therefore unnecessary to be discussed in this place. I must, however, preface my description of this collection of casts (made for the Prince A. Chigi) by the mention of certain considerations which have served me for rules in drawing it up, as well as in the choice and formation of the entire cabinet. Two advantages over all the other relics of antiquity existing are possessed by engraved gems, and both are connected with the services to be derived from them. The first is that they are able to furnish accurate instruction, which is not confined to those alone who are present, but of which those not on the spot must be entirely deprived (as in the case of statues or paintings), or at best are reduced to derive it from drawings—drawings, too, often incorrect, scarcely ever perfectly accurate, and which can only transfer to the plate what the eye of the draughtsman (frequently an unintelligent

one) has been able to comprehend in the original of his design. Antique gems, on the contrary, by means of the impressions from them, may in some sense be said to multiply themselves, and to be represented in perhaps a better point of view than the originals; from which circumstance such impressions serve equally well with the monuments themselves upon which to build our reflections and our judgments—except in those very rare and exceptional cases in which some peculiarity of the mechanical execution of the work is concerned. Their second advantage, and that one of the highest importance, is that their very hardness of material, and the nature of the work in them, especially as regards *intagli*, does to such a degree secure the integrity of these antique productions of art, that the representations, together with all their symbols and accessories, have been preserved to the present moment without the least deterioration; not mutilated, as is too often the case with works of art in marble, or, as with medals, rendered illegible by wear, or changed and corroded by their long entombment amidst the acids of the earth."

For these reasons the gem-collector ought to take every opportunity of studying all the collections to which he can obtain access, and where casts from them are unattainable, content himself with taking impressions as he goes along in the modelling-wax, hereafter to be described. An excellent opportunity is afforded by the numerous small collections brought every season for sale to London from all quarters. These, being commonly of the most miscellaneous character, consisting of the works of all ages gathered up without any discrimination, give the examiner the power of comparing every style together, and thus gradually of attaining to that almost intuitive perception of true antiquity, only to be gained by long practice. Never to pass over an antique for a modern work is a faculty soon acquired in this way; its converse, however, will be more slowly imparted to his eye; for the most experienced may occasionally be imposed upon by the exact imitation of the antique manner in some gem, the production of the skilful artists of the last century.

Much, too, may be learnt from the careful study of casts taken from



gems of undoubted authenticity, not merely as to the design and the manner of the different epochs, but even as to the mechanical execution characterising each. For these purposes casts will serve almost as well as the originals. After some experience, the student will be able, for the most part, to distinguish the actual species of the gem producing each impression, not merely the school to which the style ought to be referred. He will observe how different is the work on the sard from that found on the plasma; how that of the nicolo again has its peculiarities; whilst the shallow and flowing execution peculiar to the jacinth is to be recognised at the first glance. The style of engraving on the garnet, again, when, by a rare chance, good work in that stone does occur, has a *technique* of its own somewhat approximating to that in the jacinth.

These plaster casts are easily taken, and only require a little care in the manipulation to produce extremely accurate results. The process is as follows. The surface of the stone must first be slightly oiled, or moistened by breathing upon it, in order to prevent the adhesion of the plaster. A little of the latter, which should be of the best quality, is then to be mixed with water to the consistence of cream, and expeditiously applied with a feather like paint to every intaglio that has to be taken, working it well into the hollow lines; by which application we obviate the formation of air-bubbles on the surface of the cast, which would entirely spoil its beauty. Next surround the gem with a margin of card secured by sealing-wax, to keep the cast in shape, and forming a receptacle of the required depth. Fill this up with plaster mixed to a thicker consistency than before, applied with a small wooden spatula: let it dry for half an hour: the plaster will then separate easily from the stone, and yield a perfect impression. To obviate its glaring whiteness, it may be dipped in skim-milk, which gives the appearance of marble; or into strong tea, imparting an agreeable tint of brown. If coated with strong gum-water, the tint is much improved—toned, as it were—and the hardness of the surface, otherwise so tender, greatly augmented—a thing of importance when the casts are exposed to careless handling.

Very durable casts are made in sulphur coloured with vermilion, or Dutch red. This being carefully melted in a ladle, is poured on the gem, which has been previously secured within a rim of card, so as to retain the fluid material. The superfluous liquid must be immediately poured again into the ladle, which leaves a thin film of sulphur coating the intaglio, for the same reason as in the preliminary operation with the plaster. The case is then filled up with the molten sulphur and allowed to cool. Instead of the card-strips, the Italian *formatore* uses strips of soft lead secured by a wire—a much more certain method. This substance has a great advantage over plaster in its superior hardness, and greater expeditiousness of application when a large collection has to be taken. Again, if only impressions in sealing-wax are attainable, matrices may be taken from these in plaster, which serve to cast the sulphur in, and so furnish a more durable substitute.

A lump of modelling-wax ought to be the inseparable companion of every amateur in the examination of gems, before making a purchase, or pronouncing an opinion upon any; for by its aid alone can the work upon opaque stones be accurately examined. It may be bought at any artist's colour shop, or may be manufactured for oneself as follows. Melt beeswax with one tenth of tallow, adding some powdered rosin to the mixture when liquid, and stir well together. Colour with vermilion or lampblack; the latter the Italians prefer for our purpose. If of the due consistence it will not stick to the fingers when moulded between them; if too adhesive, add more wax. This composition readily softens when held between the fingers, so as to take the finest impression of an intaglio, which must be first moistened with the tongue, as Juvenal hath it:—

“Exiguus ceris et gemma fecerit ulla.”

Impressions in this wax remain perfect for ever if preserved from pressure; whereas those in sealing-wax waste away in the heat of summer. Modelling-wax can be more expeditiously made by adding a few drops of turpentine to beeswax coloured as before directed. It is very plastic for some time, until the spirit has evaporated, when



it becomes too hard for use. It is, however, an excellent material for preserving impressions, by resisting the effects of time, light, and heat. This was the only sealing-wax used by the Romans and throughout the Middle Ages,\* and official seals in it have come down to us uninjured from very remote times, even from the Carlovingian era.

Alexander the Prophet, of Abonitichos, was accustomed, says his historian, Lucian, to take casts in a mixture of quicklime and glue of the seals securing the letters of consultation deposited by his votaries on the altar in his temple. With these extemporised intagli he resealed them, after having seen what questions they contained, so as to enable him to return the proper responses, whilst he restored their letters to his dupes with the seals to all appearance unbroken.

#### SERIES OF CASTS.

These invaluable means for the study of the design and execution of the true antique, compared with which the most elaborate drawings are worthless, as regards familiarising the eye to the recognition of the true and the rejection of the spurious, have been at various times published, and formed into extensive series.

Of these *Lippert's* is the earliest. His first appeared with a Latin catalogue drawn up by himself and Professor Christ of Hamburg; the second, with one in German by Thierbach. The casts are taken in a peculiar composition of his own invention, said by Raspe to be fine plaster, soaked in a solution of white Castile soap, and polished with a soft brush when dry. They are chosen from the most important gems in all the European cabinets of his times—the middle of the last century.

*Dehn* (Stosch's *factotum*) in 1772 brought out another series in coloured sulphur. The catalogue was drawn up by F. M. Dolce. They amounted to 7000; and form the collection so frequently quoted by the title "*Souffres de Stosch*." Having ultimately been acquired

\* Sir Toby Belch says of his dupe: "I have him tempering between my finger and thumb, and will seal with him anon." Cicero informs us that *wax* was used for public, *clay* for private correspondence ('*Pro L. Apronio*').

by Tassie, they served for the foundation of his celebrated set of glass pastes.

*Cades*, in Rome, keeps on hand 5000 carefully selected casts in plaster, of which 400 are taken from Etruscan gems. They are sold in sets to illustrate the several styles. *Cades*, acting under the sanction of the Roman Archæological Institute, has also published a series, under the name 'Impronte Gemmarie,' of the most important newly discovered and unpublished gems, beginning in the year 1831. They are made up in *centurie*, each hundred in a folio volume, strongly bound. The casts have been made with the utmost nicety, and care is taken not to admit anything that was not both interesting and authentic. Six *centurie* have appeared, including 150 Etruscan and archaic Greek. They will be found carefully described in the 'Bulletino del Inst. Romano' for the years 1831 (p. 105), 1834 (p. 113), 1839 (p. 97). The first four *centurie* are largely indebted to the cabinet of Dr. Nott (a physician established in Rome), sold in London in 1844,\* and the two latter *centurie* to that of Mr. Currie, of Como, bequeathed by him in 1863 to the Galleria of Florence.

\* From which the Hertz Collection derived almost everything of value that appeared amidst its multifarious rubbish.







## WORKS UPON THE GLYPTIC ART AND CABINETS OF GEMS.

AGOSTINI: "*Gemme Antiche Figurate.*" 2 vols. 4to. Rome, 1686. Vol. i., dedicated to Alexander VII., contains 115 gems, portraits. Vol. ii., to Cosimo III., 150 figures and groups. Leonardo Agostini, "*Commissario delle Antichità di Roma e Lazio,*" had published in 1657 one volume, containing 214 gems, and, in 1666, a second with 50 more. The edition above named was brought out by his executors, Marinelli and Bartoli, with the same plates, but equally divided. Agostini, in his preface, gives well-deserved praise to Castruzzi, a Florentine, who drew and engraved his plates. Though executed very sketchily, in the manner of pen-and-ink drawings, and on too magnified a scale, they give the true character of the originals with far greater success than any of the other works brought out in Italy during the succeeding century. From Agostini's mode of expressing himself, it may be inferred that many of the gems were his own. The explanations of the subjects, sufficiently fanciful for the most part, were done by the learned Jesuit Bartoli.

BARTOLI: "*Museum Odeschalcum.*" Folio, 2 vols. Rome, 1751. Dedicated to L. Odeschalchi, duke of Bracciano. Plates of Queen Christina's cabinet, executed for the great-grandfather of the dedicatee by P. S. Bartoli, the best engraver of the time. Each plate gives a single gem, much magnified, for the most part very well drawn, and etched in a somewhat sketchy manner. The dedication having no signature leads to the inference that the descriptions came from Ven. Monaldini, the publisher.

BAUDELOT DE DARIYAL: "*Utilité des Voyages.*" 12mo. 1715. Illustrated with many small copper-plates in the text of remarkable gems observed by the author in his travels, and which are executed with a fidelity to the originals, coupled with a technical excellence, hardly to be met with in a publication of that period.

BEGER: "*Thesaurus de Thesauro Palatino.*" 3 vols. fol. 1687. A selection from

the statues, coins, and gems of the Elector Palatine's collection at Heidelberg Castle (since removed to Berlin). To be admired for the wonderful delicacy of the copper-plates, which, as far as regards the gems, have certainly never been surpassed.

BILLINGS: "Gems, Jewels, Coins, and Medals." 8vo. London, 1867. Copiously illustrated with photographs of gems. The main object of the writer is to preach the very salutary doctrine to all collectors that a man of taste should buy works for their beauty alone, without being at all influenced by the question of their antiquity—to enforce this moral, as it would seem, one-third of the volume is taken up with a delightful autobiography of Pistrucci. A very amusing and instructive production, though full of assertions on points of antique art altogether novel and untenable. But what gives the work a special value is the rare circumstance of its embodying the ideas of one himself an amateur gem-engraver.

BRUNN: "Geschichte der Griechischen Künstler." 1859. Vol. ii. contains a section upon inscribed gems, in which all the supposed "artists' signatures" ever published are critically examined with much accuracy and intelligence.

CAYLUS: "Recueil d'Antiquités." 4to. 7 vols. 1752. Amongst the plates of other antiquities, are a large number of gems, done on a large scale and in a somewhat sketchy manner, but still with great expressiveness, displaying the hand of one who thoroughly understood what he was copying.

CHADOUILLET: "Camées et Pierres Gravées de la Bibliothèque Impériale." 12mo. Paris, 1858. A perfect model of a descriptive catalogue, full of valuable information respecting the history of the more important Numbers, compiled with immense research and scrupulous minuteness.

CHAUSÉE, LA: "Gemme Antiche Figurate." 2 vols. 8vo. Roma, 2nd ed. 1805. Plates by Bartoli in his usual style, of gems from the author's collection. N.B. The first edition appeared in 4to, 1700.

CHIFLET: "Anastasis Childerici Francorum Regis." 4to. Antwerp, 1655. A minute account, with many plates, of the jewels, arms, &c., discovered in the tomb of Childeric at Tournay, May 27, 1653. Contains long and valuable dissertations upon the rings and amulets of the ancients; the latter subject illustrated (p. 267) with a well-executed plate of twenty Etruscan scarabei, the first, to my knowledge, ever published. In the plate at p. 96 is figured, under Childeric's ring, the pretended signet of St. Louis engraved in sapphire.

CREUZER: "Zur Gemmenkunde: Antike Geschnittene Steine vom Grabmal der Heiligen Elizabeth, &c." Vol. iii. of his "Archæologie." Replete with acute observations, and valuable elucidations of many gem-types: plates of all the gems.

CORSI: "Delle Pietre Antiche." 8vo. Roma, 2nd ed. 1833. Describes all the stones found in ancient remains, the common, the marbles, and the gems, identifying with much sagacity their present representatives. The latter portion of the treatise, Parti iii. and iv., "Delle Pietre Fine, e Preziose," contains much that is valuable to the dactyliologist.

EDERMAYER: "Gemmarum Thesaurus." Folio. Nuremburgh, 1720. With numerous plates, done chiefly in outline by Dorsch, the gem-engraver. Unmercifully censured by Mariette, who attributes the originals, one and all, to Dorsch himself; yet



many of the plates are not without merit, and have now a special interest from exhibiting the elegant Renaissance settings in which most of the larger pieces were then mounted.

"EDINBURGH REVIEW" for 1867 contains two essays, "Precious Stones," and "Antique Gems." The first is a complete view of the natural history of the subject, in its ancient and modern phases; the second, of the glyptic art as practised amongst all the nations of antiquity. Both are admirable in their way, exhibiting the union of modern science with considerable practical experience; but the classical scholar will be occasionally amused by detecting many places where the writer's eagerness to dispute or disparage the statements of his precursor in the same fields has led him into untenable assertions and ludicrous mistranslations of ancient texts.

FORTSUM: "On some Finger-rings of the Early Christian Period." "Archæological Journal," vol. xxvi. An instructive monograph, the only one known to me upon the subject, with a large number of illustrations from specimens in the writer's collection.

GIULIANELLI: "Memorie degli Intagliatori Moderni." 4to. Livorno, 1753. Designed as a supplement to the treatises of Vasari and Mariette, which it comprises: full of valuable information, but badly arranged and difficult to follow.

GORI: "Museum Florentinum." Folio. 1731. The last two volumes of this magnificent work consist of plates of 181 camei and 1010 intagli, selected from the cabinet at Florence; of which the more important are elaborately shaded, the rest given in outline.

GORI: "Dactyliotheca Smithiana." 2 vols. fol. 1767. Printed at Venice at the expense of our George III., who had purchased the cabinet of Consul Smith, formed in the city. Vol. I. contains drawings of 100 gems, chiefly Cinque-cento camei, beautifully engraved, each on a separate plate. Vol. II., Gori's "Dissertatio Glyptographica," valuable for its notices of the modern artists.

GORI: "Gemme Astriferæ." 4to. Many plates of astrological and Gnostic gems, the designs much magnified, and coarsely engraved.

GORLEUS: "Gorlei Dactyliotheca." Small 4to. Delft, 1601. Is the earliest work upon this special subject that has come to my knowledge. It gives copper-plates, carefully but stiffly drawn, of 126 rings and 148 unset gems. The second edition, 1609, contains the same number of rings, but the gems are increased to 172. After Gorleus' death, in the same year at Delft, his cabinet was purchased of his heirs by our James I. for the Prince of Wales, but was dispersed on the sale of the royal gallery under the Commonwealth, and many of the gems were recognised by me amongst the Arundel. A third edition was brought out by Gronovius, Leyden, 1695, with the former plates re-engraved and fantastically arranged, and many new ones added, including all from "Macarii Apistopistus," bringing up the number of the rings to 216, of the gems to 682.

GRAVELLE: "Recueil de Pierres Gravées Antiques." 2 vols. 4to. Paris, 1732-7. No author's name on title-page; but the frontispiece is Minerva, seated, holding a shield with the same title, and the initials L.D.G. in a cypher, for "Levesque de Gravelle." A series of copper-plates of many gems drawn by the author from casts. They are much magnified, one occupying each plate, and are done in outline in a loose, inaccurate

style, without any details or much intelligence of the meaning of the subjects. The letterpress is no more than a brief description and explanation of the designs.

KIRCHMANN: "De Annulis." 12mo. Slesvici, 1657. A work containing perhaps the greatest amount of learning and research ever compressed into the same small compass, presenting almost everything that can be discovered as to the use of rings and seals in ancient and mediæval times. Upon its author, the Lubeck antiquary, I, for one, may with good cause invoke the anathema, "Pereant qui ante nos nostra dixerunt!" for he has anticipated, and often as it were *en passant*, many of my own fancied and favourite discoveries in this before, as I vainly supposed, untrodden field.

KÖHLER: "Abhandlung über den geschnittenen Steine, mit den Namen der Künstler." "Kleine Abhandlungen zur Gemmen-kunde." Vols. iii. and iv. of his "Gesammelte Schriften." St. Petersburg, 1831. Treatises amongst the most instructive ever composed upon the subject of engraved gems.

KRAUSE: "Pyrgoteles." 8vo. Halle, 1856. Or, as described on the title-page, "The Precious Stones of the Ancients, in their connexion with Nature and creative Art, with a consideration of ornamental and signet-rings, especially those of the Greeks and Romans." A truly German performance, displaying an enormous amount of dactyliological reading, neutralized by the national want of *esprit*, and a total deficiency of all practical knowledge of the subject. It is self-evident that the author was never the possessor of a single gem, and if he had ever *seen* any it was merely through the glass of a show-case. The book, however, has a certain value in the immense number of references it contains to the whole extent of the literature of the glyptic art. The three plates of illustrations, in lithographic outline, are wonderful specimens of fine work in that manner, but their subjects have been selected with little judgment.

LESSING: "Briefe antiquarischen Inhalt." 2 vols. 12mo. Berlin, 1768. Comprising a series of disquisitions upon different heads of the glyptic art, in form of criticisms upon a work, published by Dr. Klotz, treating of the same subject. From these essays more real information may be gained than from any other author that has come under my notice, and it is conveyed in a very amusing and piquant style.

LEVY: "Siegel und Gemmen mit aramäischen, phönischischen, althebräischen, himjaritischen, nabatäischen, und altsyrischen Inschriften, erklärt von Prof. Dr. M. A. Levy." 8vo. Breslau, 1869. With three plates, giving drawings of a large number of inscribed Syrian gems.

LICETUS, FORTUNIUS: "De Appulis Antiquis." 4to. Patavii, 1648. Gives, in the quaint style of the age, a summary of almost everything to be gathered from the ancients upon this subject.

MACARIUS: "Macarii (Canon l' Heurenx) Abraxas, seu Proteus Apistopistus," with Appendix by Chiflet. Small 4to. Antwerp, 1610. An excellent dissertation upon the Basilidan gems; with many plates of intagli accurately drawn in a very spirited style by Jacques Werde, a military engineer, an accomplished draughtsman, with a taste for antiquities.

MARIETTE: "Pierres Gravées." 2 vols. 4to. Paris, 1750. An introduction to the subject upon the materials and processes of the art, with a history of its practitioners, which supplies much information, and is drawn up with a lucidity and order truly



French. The large number of engravings, by Bouchardon, after gems in the royal cabinet are, however, in too loose and flowing a style to give any accurate idea of their originals.

"MARLBOROUGH GEMS:" 2 vols. fol. 1783. Brought out at the expense of the duke of Marlborough, for private distribution only amongst the crowned heads and nobility of Europe. The gems were drawn by Cipriani and engraved by Bartolozzi.\* Regarded as works of art they reach perfection, but being on too large a scale, and often *improved* in the drawing, they fail to give a correct idea of their prototypes. A second edition from the same plates was printed a few years back, for the trade.

MASKELYNE: "The Marlborough Gems." Printed for private distribution. 1870. A description of each gem in the cabinet, numbering 739 pieces, arranged with great care according to their subjects, with occasional criticisms upon their style and date. The Catalogue is prefaced by a minute history of the origin and growth of the collection, and by a brief dissertation upon the mineralogy and art of the subject, replete with valuable information to the student.

MATTER: "Histoire Critique du Gnosticisme." 3 vols. 8vo. 1828. Many plates of Gnostic talismans, collected mostly from previous publications, and very neatly lithographed.

MATTER: "Voyage Gnostique en Italie." 8vo. 1852. Twelve plates of inscribed tablets, and a few gems from the originals, in lithograph.

MILLIN: "Introduction à l'Étude des Pierres Gravées." 8vo. Paris, 1797. The mere skeleton of a manual, judiciously planned, but very meagre in all its branches, bearing every mark of being composed with great haste, and for a limited space (in an Encyclopedia).

MONTFAUCON: "Antiquité Expliquée." Fol. Paris, 1719. The section "Les Abraxas" gives plates of all the Gnostic gems previously published by Chiflet, Capello, &c., with very large accessions from recent sources. In Vol. iii. are figured an immense variety of rings of every description.

"MUSEUM CORTONENSE:" Folio. Rome, 1750. An illustrated description of the antiquities preserved in the Etruscan Museum and in the collections of different noblemen of Cortona. Of the plates the larger portion are devoted to the gems, each being drawn to a greatly enlarged scale, and occupying a whole page, having, however, its outline of the real size placed below. These gems, containing several interesting types, are very unequally represented, being evidently done by several hands. Some are masterly specimens of copperplate engraving, whilst an equal number are drawn without either intelligence or technical skill. The works themselves appear to belong almost entirely to the Roman imperial period, contrary to what was to be expected from their place of discovery.

NAGLER: "Künstler Lexicon" gives useful, but too brief, notices of many engravers.

NATIER: "Traité de la Méthode Antique de Graver en Pierres Fines, comparée

\* The Latin descriptions are from the pen of the learned Jacob Bryant, the Duke's librarian. Uvedale Price's copy is priced in Lumley's Catalogue at £20, but others have sold at much higher rates.

avec la Moderne." 4to. London, 1755. Valuable as giving the practical experience of one of the greatest of the modern practitioners of the art, and illustrated with 37 plates tolerably executed. Some of them, however, are particularly interesting, as they are given to illustrate the progressive steps by which this artist effected his most important copies of celebrated antiques.

"OLD RINGS:" a series of papers upon the materials and remains of ancient Glyptics, which appeared in "Frazer's Magazine" for 1856. The name of the author I have been unable to discover; but he writes in a very pleasing style, and with a profound knowledge of the subject derived from his own experience as a long-practised collector of gems.

ORLEANS: "Description des principales Pierres Gravées du Cabinet de S.A.R. M. le Duc d'Orléans." 2 vols. fol. Paris, 1780-4. The plates, by St. Aubin, equal the illustrations of the Marlborough Cabinet, especially as regards the heads, in which department they, in my opinion, are the most satisfactory attempt that has yet been made to reproduce the true character of gem-works. But the artist has been less successful with the figures, the drawing of which he has somewhat *Frenchified*. The lengthy descriptions, by the Abbés De la Chaux and Le Blonde, are overloaded with superfluous learning, but often betray complete ignorance of ancient art, in their preposterous mistakes as to the meaning of the most obvious types and inscriptions.

PANOFKA: "Gemmen mit Inschriften." 4to. Many plates of inscribed gems but drawn to the actual size, and therefore far from giving an adequate idea of the originals.

PASSERI: "Novus Thesaurus Gemmarum Veterum ex Insignioribus Dactylis Selectarum, cum Explicationibus. Romæ, 1781. Sumptibus Venantii Monaldini." 2 vols. folio, each containing 100 plates. The gems are drawn to a greatly enlarged scale, incorrectly and without finish. Each gem occupies one plate, being enclosed within an elaborate framework of arabesques (every decade in a different design), adapted from Raphael's Vatican *ornati*, and those in the Baths of Titus.

"PONIATOWSKY GEMS:" 2 vols. 4to. London, 1859. Only seventy-five copies printed, at twenty guineas each. Many plates of photographs of the principal gems in the series. The author of the letterpress writes in the full conviction that these works are all antique, and the signatures upon them equally authentic!

RASPE: "A Descriptive Catalogue of Engraved Gems." London, 2 vols. 4to. 1791. By the learned Raspe, written as an explanatory catalogue of the 15800 pastes made by Tassie from gems of all classes and periods. A most serviceable commentary, illustrated with short dissertations upon the history of the different series, and the myths of the more interesting designs, interspersed with curious remarks upon artists and collectors, making the work still an invaluable companion and guide in the study. The numerous plates, by Allan, of Edinburgh, are etched in a very sketchy style, but are done with considerable taste, and an accurate understanding of the subjects to be drawn. From their slight depth, these engravings are often in very poor condition, which has given rise to the unfavourable opinion generally entertained of their merit.

ROSSI: "Gemme Antiche Figurate." 4 vols. fol. Rome, 1707. With text by the noted antiquary, Maffei. The numerous plates are all in the bold, coarse style of the Roman copper-plates of the previous century, utterly unsuitable for the character of gems, and therefore may be condemned as utterly without value to the student.



"SPILSBURY GEMS:" 8vo. 1785.\* A selection of gems from different cabinets, principally the Grerville and Slade, engraved in 29 plates by Spilsbury, in the manner of Rembrandt. Many of these are done with much taste, and with incredible expenditure of labour; but the peculiar style is evidently less adapted to the subject than that used by St. Aubin or Bartolozzi. The plates having fallen into the hands of Mr. Lumley, they have been retouched, and a new edition printed, in which the impressions are necessarily far inferior to the original publication.

ST. LAURENT: "Dissertazione sopra le Pietre Preziose degli Antichi, e sopra il Modo con quel furono lavorate," published in "Saggi, Dissert. Acad. di Cortona," vols. v., vi., 1751. A copious treatise upon the true nature of the gems used by the ancients in their glyptic works, giving a good view of the subject, but not advancing much beyond De Boot and De Laet in the identification of the several species. Part II. treats at length upon the ancient modes of working stones, marbles, and gems, the conclusion arrived at being that processes and instruments alike were identical with those used in the modern arts.

STOSCH: "Gemmæ Antiquæ Cælatæ Sculptorum Nominibus Insignitæ." Folio. Amstel. 1724. The first publication of gems bearing the supposed signatures of artists, as such, and which gave the great impetus to the forging of such signatures in the years that followed. The plates of twenty-seven gems by Picart are most elaborately executed, but on so gigantic a scale of enlargement, as to give the effect of bas-reliefs rather than of gem-work.

VISCONTI: "Esposizione dell' Impronte di Antiche Gemme raccolte per uso di S. E. il Sig. D. Agostino Chigi." In vol. ii. of Visconti's "Opere Varie." A detailed description of 573 + 81 casts of the most important gems known at the beginning of this century, in all cabinets, full of instruction, both as to the subjects and the styles of art of the originals.

The same volume contains a detailed catalogue of the *original* Poniatowsky cabinet, numbering then no more than 154 pieces.

VIVENZI: "Gemme Antiche per la piu parte Inedite." 4to. Rome, 1809. A series of very learned disquisitions upon the gems, which are engraved with great spirit as well as evident accuracy in outline, much enlarged, in 31 plates, one to each.

DE VOGUE: "Intailles et Légendes Sémitiques." "Révue Archéologique," vol. xvii. N. S. p. 432; with three plates of gems.

WATERTON: "On Episcopal Rings." "Archæological Journal," vol. xx. A monograph replete with curious information, derived from an immense variety of sources, and illustrated with many cuts of the most noteworthy specimens still extant.

WATERTON: "Descriptive Catalogue of the Waterton Dactyliotheca." This work (the MS. of which the author had kindly allowed me to peruse) was actually set up in type, but the occurrence of unfortunate circumstances prevented the printing. This is greatly to be lamented, the work being the very best specimen of its kind known to me, both for its comprehensiveness, in consequence of the immense extent of the collection, and the completeness of every one of its divisions; and still more for the learning and

\* The plates bear date 1784.

research displayed in the several preliminary dissertations, which condensed and supplemented the treatises of Licetus and Kirchmann in the same branch of archaeology. Its composition was the matured result of infinite labour and of many years' study in foreign libraries and cabinets, to which the author's position had given him unusual facilities of access. An extensive series of woodcuts had also been prepared to illustrate the publication, giving carefully-drawn fac-similes of the most important pieces of the *Dactyliotheca*.

WINCKELMANN: "*Description de Pierres Gravées du feu Baron de Stosch*." 4to. Florence, 1760. An admirable description by the great antiquary of the extensive cabinet formed by Baron Stosch, including copious dissertations upon the subjects and the styles of the principal pieces. As the collection had been formed with a view to its completeness in point of subjects, for which purpose pastes of all other celebrated gems were admitted into it, this catalogue becomes the most useful of guides to the collector, hardly any type that can come into his hands not finding its counterpart and elucidation in the text of Winckelmann.

WINCKELMANN: "*Monimenti Inediti*." 2 vols. Folio. Rome. Interspersed amongst the plates, under their respective headings, are many important gem works, before unpublished. They are excessively enlarged, and the style of engraving is much too coarse for their nature, yet the drawing gives an adequate idea of their design and spirit. The short dissertations upon their designs convey, as might be expected, an immense amount of information, and display the acuteness, as well as learning, of the great critic.

WORLIDGE: "*Drawings of Antique Gems after the manner of Rembrandt*. By T. Worlidge." An extensive series of 179 plates, 8vo. 1754-7, published at eighteen guineas, done in the style of Rembrandt, and reproducing the most noted gems of all English cabinets then existing, more particularly of the Marlborough. These plates, though displaying incredible labour, are often inferior to the Spilsbury in catching the spirit of the originals, and the descriptions placed below are for the greater part a set of the most ludicrous misnomers. The first edition came out in an octavo form; the second, in quarto (1768), with 182 plates, was struck off when the impression began to be worn.\* The change in form was made with the view of deceiving purchasers, by thus giving the edition the appearance of being the most important of the two.

WORSLEY: "*Museum Worsleyanum. A Collection of Antique Basso-relievs, Busts, Statues, and Gems*." London, 1824. 2 vols. folio. Vol. i. contains twenty-three plates of single gems, mostly camei, drawn to a greatly magnified scale, and very well executed in line engraving; also five plates of minor gems, with several upon the same plate, done in a less finished, but yet satisfactory manner.

WRIGHT: "*Miscellanea Graphica*." 4to. London, 1859. A descriptive catalogue of the most important specimens of mediæval jewellery and metal-work in the London-

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\* Some of them (e.g., *The Reposing Hercules*) show traces of considerable retouching. Clarke can find no terms sufficiently strong for the condemnation of drawing, style, and execution, equally, of these plates.



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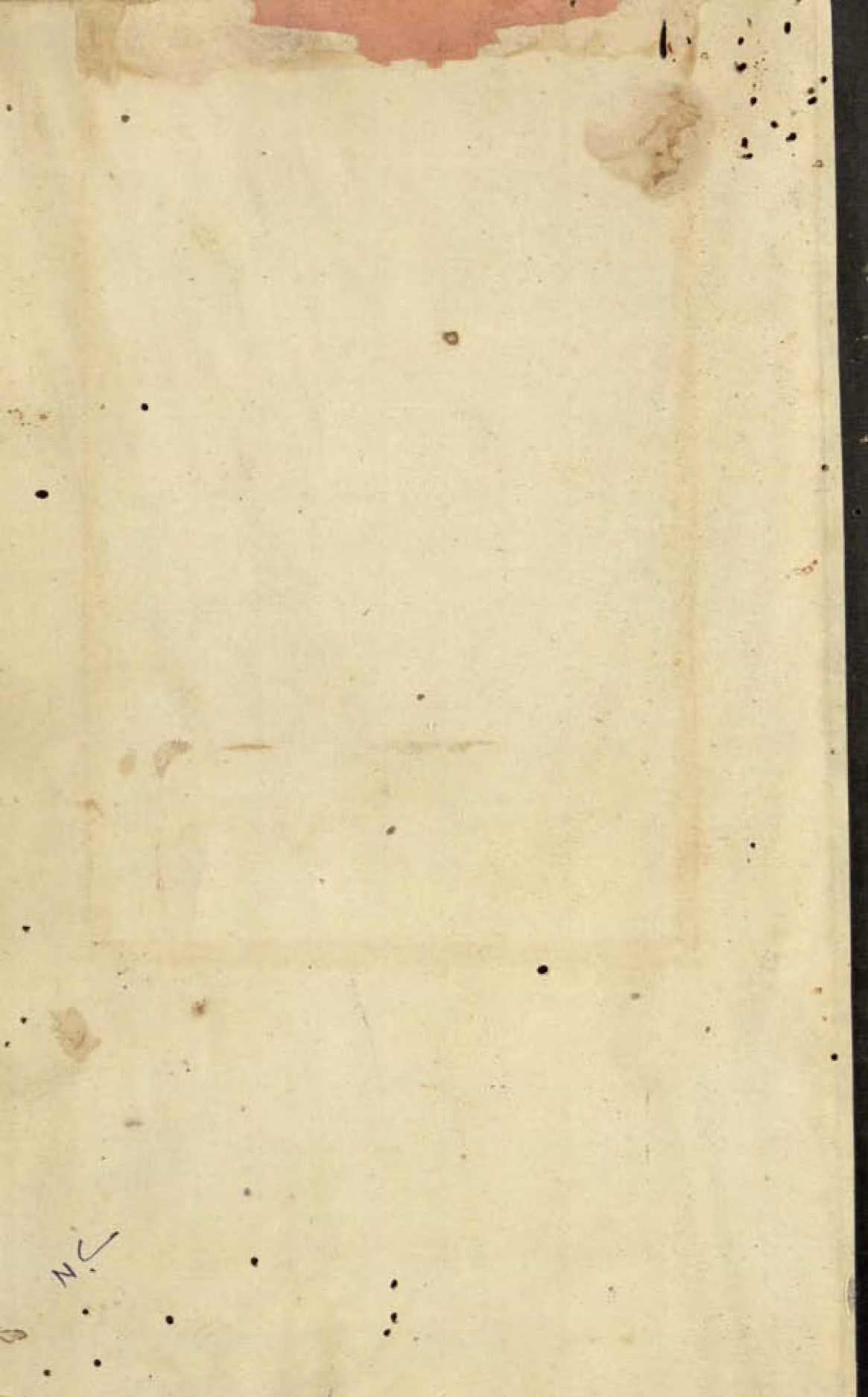


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